

## ABSTRACT

### BLACK NATIONALISM

MENSAH, AKIL

B.A. INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND, 1996

#### A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE HONORABLE MARCUS GARVEY AND THE HONORABLE ELIJAH MUHAMMAD

Advisor: Dr. David F. Dorsey

Thesis dated December, 1999

This study examined the backgrounds of Marcus Garvey and Elijah Muhammad, analyzed the origins and ideologies of their respective black nationalist programs, and traced the historical inaccuracies concerning their individual relationships to each other and their programs' interrelationship.

The study was based upon the premise that many historians have misrepresented the history of black nationalism by creating theoretical links between Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam. The thesis scrutinized the evolution of some theories which led to the Nation of Islam being identified, historically, as a scion of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

The study utilized a comparative approach based upon the juxtaposition of historical evidence concerning Garvey and Muhammad's upbringings, their religious beliefs, and their personal associations. The study found that Garvey and Muhammad's economic agendas closely resembled one another, but their programs were not as ideologically connected as many historians have suggested.

The conclusion drawn from this study was that historians not only must research academic sources, but also, they must rely upon non-traditional sources in order to balance mainstream tendencies to misrepresent black nationalism.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE HONORABLE MARCUS GARVEY AND  
THE HONORABLE ELIJAH MUHAMMAD

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

AKIL MENSAH

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

DECEMBER 1999

R iii 149



© 1999

AKIL MENSAH

All Rights Reserved

### NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All dissertations and theses deposited in the Robert W. Woodruff Library must be used only in Accordance with the stipulations prescribed by the author in the preceding statement.

The author of this thesis/dissertation is:

Name: Akil Mensah

Street Address: 4412 Livingston Rd., SE, Apt. C

City, State and Zip: Washington, DC 20032-2943

The director of this thesis/dissertation is:

Professor: David F. Dorsey

Department: African and African American Studies

School: Arts and Sciences, Clark Atlanta University

Office Telephone: (404) 880-8742

Users of this thesis/dissertation not regularly enrolled as students of the Atlanta University Center are Required to attest acceptance of the preceding stipulations by signing below. Libraries borrowing this thesis/dissertation for use of patrons are required to see that each user records here the information requested.

NAME OF USER	ADDRESS	DATE	TYPE OF USE
_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____		_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____		_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____		_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____		_____

## **Acknowledgements**

I thank Bro. Michael Muhammad, owner of Khan's bookstore, for providing me with the necessary literature, concerning The Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, to write this thesis. I thank Kelly Harris for supplying me with all the necessary literature on The Honorable Marcus Garvey and for furnishing me with many other books on black nationalism. I thank my advisor, Dr. David F. Dorsey, for challenging, encouraging, and supporting me during my matriculation at Clark Atlanta University. I thank my brother, Verneil Lewis Jr., for all of his support. Also, I thank Keith Robinson, for showing me the city and for rescuing me on a number of occasions during my sojourn in Atlanta. I thank Drs. Josephine Bradley and Hashim Gibrill for their advice, criticisms, and encouragement.

Many others have contributed to my overall well-being and development while attending CAU, including LaDonna M. Simmons, Dr. Janice Sumler-Edmond, Dr. Emmanuel Konde, Bro. Edward Muhammad, Sis. Phylathia Muhammad, Bro. George Muhammad, Steve Redmond, Tonya Vinson, Andrea Warthen, Candra L. Ruffin, Sonya Kaye Woodard-King, Shalonda D. Murray, Diana Alston, Jamilah Jefferson, Yakira Y'Israel, Peter Joe Perdue, Alvin Gill, "ArtMan," Salim Uhuru, Mrs. Betty Chaney, Ms. Lillian Johnson, and Mrs. Monica Lee Benton. Finally, I thank the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan and Minister Nasir Makr Hakim for making more of the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad available to the public. Peace to my peoples....

## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. THE FACTS VERSUS THE THEORIES .....	13
3. MARCUS GARVEY AND THE UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (1914-1927) .....	53
4. ELIJAH MUHAMMAD AND THE NATION OF ISLAM (1930-1947) .....	78
5. VOICES FROM THE PAST .....	101
A Hypothetical Exchange Between Garvey and Muhammad	
6. A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GARVEY AND MUHAMMAD .....	126
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	141

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Humility; it is either the hypocrisy of a schemer or the timidity of a slave; it implies the absence of power.

Baruch Spinoza

When the Honorable Marcus Garvey<sup>1</sup> established the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the African Communities League (ACL) in 1914, he ushered in a new period of nationalistic thought among black people throughout the diaspora. To his cynics, Garvey merely represented one radical idealist in a successive line of black nationalists who attempted to motivate black people to strive for their independence. Certainly, one could argue that between the end of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, the nationalist sentiments among black people in America heightened because of men like Toussaint L'Ouverture, Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, David Walker, and Nat Turner, who all expressed a desire to eliminate the nemeses of slavery and oppression. One also could argue that such men as Paul Cuffe, Prince Saunders, or Thomas Paul, who advocated the liberation of black people through various colonization schemes during the early nineteenth century, deserve the appellation of pioneers of black nationalism. If one wanted to complicate matters further, one could contend that nationalist inclinations always have existed as part of the black experience in America.

Whatever the case, Marcus Garvey precipitated a revival in the desire for colonization among black people in America that, relatively speaking, had become unrealistic to most black people after the Civil War. Indeed, Edward W. Blyden, Martin Delaney, and Bishop Henry McNeal Turner propounded the idea of emigration in the years after the Civil War, but the philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois overshadowed their ideas. Thus, when Garvey revived the idea, some black accommodationists and integrationists in the United States proved to be the most averse to his plans of redemption for Africans throughout the diaspora. Some historians may contend that Garvey's ethnicity as a Jamaican immigrant hampered his success in the United States, while others may contend that Garvey's grandiose business adventures constrained the success of the UNIA, thus affecting the bounds of black nationalism in early twentieth century America.

Garvey's ideas concerning black nationalism, nevertheless, differed from his predecessors' in that he wanted to exclude white people from any positions which accorded them authority over black people. A century earlier, Paul Cuffe had predicated his ideas of an African colony on the benignity of Europeans, and Cuffe had accepted European administration under the aegis of Christian missionaries.<sup>2</sup> Garvey, on the other hand, based his concepts on the determination of and reliance on black people for the governance of Africa. In 1914, Garvey solicited the assistance of Booker T. Washington in order to facilitate his plans for Africans, but Washington's death in 1915 prevented the two leaders from consolidating their energies for the common good of black people in America. Both Garvey and Washington concentrated their efforts on economic

independence via separatism, although Washington relied upon white people's philanthropy more than Garvey did.

Opportunistically, Garvey managed to procure funds from black people in America with relative ease, especially when one considers that his movement commenced during World War I. The treatment of black soldiers upon their return from the war, the high rate of lynching, and the overall, impoverished condition of black people in the United States supplied the impetuses for Garvey's nationalistic program. Most black people had grown weary of depending upon an indifferent government that failed to address the issues pertinent to their livelihood and prosperity. Garvey's insistence upon self-determination and his effrontery as a spokesperson for black nationalism attracted the masses of black people like no other leader before him. Garvey's deportation from the United States in 1927, though, hastened the demise of the UNIA. Undoubtedly, his departure caused the organization to flounder and fragment into warring factions, leaving black people in the United States without a nationalist leader.

Almost three years after Garvey's deportation, however, in Detroit, Michigan, a man named Wallace Fard (pronounced Far-rod) Muhammad began teaching a doctrine that black people never had heard in America. Master Fard Muhammad, as his followers called him, had been studying black people all over the world, and like Garvey, he offered a separatist solution to the problems of black people. Unlike Garvey, though, Master Fard Muhammad reserved his solution for the "Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the wilderness of North America." In the fall of 1931, Master Fard Muhammad chose a physically diminutive man to relay his message to black people in the United States. Before meeting Master Fard Muhammad, this man knew himself as Elijah Poole. After

studying under Master Fard Muhammad, Elijah Poole became Elijah Muhammad, messenger of Allah. Equipped with the revelation that the “white man is the devil,” Elijah attracted numerous followers with his notions of a “Black Nation within a Nation.” Elijah stressed that his mission required him to resurrect the mentally and spiritually dead, so-called Negroes in the United States. Unlike Garvey, Muhammad neither concerned himself with the plight of Africans, nor did he engage in lofty rhetoric about the continent of Africa as a homeland for black people. To Muhammad, the entire world belonged to the “original, Asiatic black man, and knowledge of self” would impel so-called Negroes in the United States to lead the reclamation of what rightfully belonged to the Black Nation.

After Garvey’s deportation, many ardent Garveyites needed spiritual rejuvenation, and in 1931, Elijah Muhammad began supplying such invigoration. Small in stature but dauntless in spirit, Elijah Muhammad began teaching Islam in Hamtramck, Michigan, a small city within the city of Detroit.<sup>3</sup> Garveyism had affected every major city in the United States, but Garvey’s followers never had learned what they learned under the tutelage of Elijah Muhammad. Since the Nation of Islam (NOI) drew myriad Garveyites to its meetings, some historians have propagated the idea that Elijah Muhammad was an adherent to Garveyism. If this claim were true, then, one could assume that Master Fard Muhammad also followed Marcus Garvey because Master Fard Muhammad taught the Honorable Elijah Muhammad everything that he knew with respect to Islam and the solution to the woes of black people.

Out of all the scholarship that I have studied, however, I did not find one book, article, or document that even attempted to argue that Master Fard Muhammad followed



the Honorable Marcus Garvey. Thus, some basic questions that this thesis raises and answers are: Why have academic studies perpetuated the diffusion of myths concerning the person of Master Fard Muhammad and his founding of the Nation of Islam? Do the similarities between and the chronological contiguity of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Nation of Islam support the rationale that the latter developed as a result of the former? If this rationale is logical, then, how does one account for the plethora of differences between the two organizations?

Research reveals that most of the scholarly studies on black nationalism proclaimed that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad followed the ideology of the Honorable Marcus Garvey. One purpose of this thesis is not only to dispel this myth, but also to disprove this theory with facts. Another purpose of this thesis is to examine two specific styles of black nationalism. The Honorable Marcus Garvey impressed upon the masses of black people the idea of “Africa for the Africans,” whereas the Honorable Elijah Muhammad endorsed the concept of a separate territory for the so-called Negroes within the borders of the United States. Consequently, this thesis also addresses the following questions: How did both leaders intend to effect their ideas? How did white supremacy affect their respective visions of black nationalism?

Furthermore, as an historical study, this thesis examines the historical conditions and circumstances that shaped the mindsets of both leaders. Psychologists understand that all childhood experiences contribute to the panorama of adults’ lives. What experiences, then, conditioned both leaders’ minds to accept separatism as the solution to the black predicament? What characteristics or traits of these two leaders enthralled the masses of “common” black people? What attributes made these two men despised by

black bourgeoisie and black intelligentsia alike? How did education affect the worldviews of both men? This thesis represents the first of its kind in academia in that it does not build upon the scholarly theories concerning the person of Master Fard Muhammad and his founding of the Nation of Islam. Also, this thesis represents the first academic study to examine and compare the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, based upon their philosophies, in a detailed fashion. This thesis does not attempt to propose any new theories, but rather, this thesis challenges the existing theories by analyzing the documented facts about Garvey and Muhammad.

To date, the academic studies have linked both leaders and their organizations because of their similarities. This thesis attempts to sever that link by accentuating their differences, thereby exposing some of the weaknesses and strengths of both programs with respect to black nationalism. The following is the operational definition of black nationalism:

The belief of a group that it possesses, or ought to possess, a country; that it shares, or ought to share, a common heritage of language, culture, and religion; and that its heritage, way of life, and ethnic identity are distinct from those of other groups. Nationalists believe that they ought to rule themselves and shape their own destinies, and that they should therefore be in control of their social, economic, and political institutions. Such beliefs among black people are here called black nationalism.<sup>4</sup>

The researcher took the liberty of updating the last line of this definition borrowed from E.U. Essien-Udom to conform to the standards of a new era and generation. The actual definition included the words “American Negro,” which, in the opinion of the researcher, is an obsolete descriptor for black people in the United States. The Honorable Marcus Garvey referred to black people as Negroes, while the Honorable Elijah Muhammad coined the phrase “so-called Negroes,” which played on black people’s acceptance of this

word to describe themselves. Such a nuance in terminology to describe black people gives the reader some insight into the distinguishing characteristics of Garvey and Muhammad's ideas concerning black nationalism.

Critics of Garvey and Muhammad accused them of teaching black supremacy because the two leaders envisioned independent black nations. In fact, some black intelligentsia and bourgeoisie accused Garvey and Muhammad of exhibiting racism toward white folks. In other words, they accused Garvey and Muhammad of wanting to treat white people as white people have treated black people. *Webster's Third New World International Dictionary* defines racism in the following way:

The assumption that psychocultural traits and capacities are determined by biological race and that races differ decisively from one another which is usually coupled with a belief in the inherent superiority of a particular race and its right to domination over others.<sup>5</sup>

According to this definition of racism and previous research, the opponents of Garvey and Muhammad entirely misunderstood them. Indeed, Garvey utilized Negritude to instill pride and dignity in black people, and surely, Muhammad used psychology to decontaminate the minds of black people. Do these facts, though, categorically confine them to being racists? The key to the definition of what makes a person's actions racist lies in the word domination. Neither Garvey nor Muhammad taught that they wanted to dominate white people, as white people have done black people. Both men simply wanted black people to assert their right to govern themselves, for only peoples affected by a slave mentality desire to be governed by others.

So, some black critics of these two men obviously accepted their own inferiority and wanted to remain subjects of white people. Even worse, such critics wanted all black people to agree to their type of reasoning and continue to stagnate as a people. Most of

Garvey and Muhammad's critics among black people can be classified as integrationists. These people believed in the inherent goodness of man and mankind. Black integrationists desired to coalesce with white people as the way of improving the condition of all black people. This stance impelled them to criticize Garvey and Muhammad without understanding; this view forced them to depend upon white people; this view caused such black opponents of Garvey and Muhammad to seek the friendship of the same people who truthfully despised them.

Perhaps the greatest reason for this stance among, particularly, black intelligentsia and bourgeoisie included their understanding of God. During Garvey's sojourn in the United States, most black people subscribed to Christianity as their religion. In fact, even Marcus Garvey accepted the orthodoxy of Catholicism, although in terms of orthopraxy, he differed from most Catholics. Garvey's views on God conformed to his understanding of self. Elijah Muhammad, on the other hand, introduced a concept of God to black people throughout the United States that they never had encountered. Muhammad asserted that Islam, as taught by Master Fard Muhammad—not as practiced by orthodox Muslims—freed black people from the fetters of mental and spiritual bondage.

Like Garvey, Muhammad's interpretation of God forced the individual to look within himself or herself. This thesis addresses both leaders' concepts of God and examines these concepts in their historical contexts. Along with the issue of black nationalism, the issue of God has driven the black experience in America. The reader will see that both men contemplated the topic of God quite profoundly. For Garvey, the issue of God remained something individual and somewhat peripheral in relationship to

black nationalism, whereas for Muhammad, black peoples' understanding of God became central to black nationalism.

The final issue addressed in this analysis of Garvey and Muhammad deals with the idea of racial purity. Both Garvey and Muhammad understood that miscegenation, rape, and intermixture caused black people to acquire some characteristics of white people. Both men constantly admonished black people about the dangers of miscegenation, and they used religion, science, and nature to support their arguments against intermixture. Racial purity, for purposes of this thesis, refers to a proscription on exogamous marriages; the reader already should understand that very few, if any, descendants of slaves in the United States can claim to be "racially pure." So, the researcher scrutinizes and compares Garvey and Muhammad's ideas regarding racial purity, primarily, in order to emphasize the differences between a two-tiered, color caste system and a three-tiered, color caste system. Also, such an examination allows the reader to discern for himself/herself how miscegenation affects the realization of a black nation.

The primary themes addressed in this thesis center upon the matters of black nationalism, God, and racial purity. According to the operational definition of black nationalism, the subjects of God and racial purity actually comprise parts of the entire issue of black nationalism. This thesis utilizes comparative methods to highlight the differences between the ideologies of the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad in the above-mentioned three areas, despite the mutually inclusive qualities of the concepts. The thesis also employs comparative techniques when discussing the backgrounds of both men and when discussing the psychological impact that both men expected their teachings to have on black people. As stated earlier, this

methodology allows the reader to grasp what conditions created an environment conducive to Garvey and Muhammad's rise to leadership. Likewise, this methodology will help the reader to grasp fully the socialization of black people's minds under Eurocentric institutions and the methods utilized by the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to invert the Eurocentric socialization of black minds.

Heretofore, I have outlined what issues, questions, and themes that this thesis addresses. I have arranged the remainder of the thesis into five chapters. Chapter II, "The Facts Versus The Theories," reviews the literature on the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, analyzing the theories propagated by past and current scholars about both men. Also, where necessary, this chapter compares the academic studies on black nationalism to the non-academic studies so that the reader can discern what has been substantiated and what remains unsubstantiated concerning Garvey and Muhammad's organizational affiliations and the founding of their respective organizations. Chapter III, "Marcus Garvey And The Universal Negro Improvement Association (1914-1927)," provides a brief overview of the Honorable Marcus Garvey and examines some of the strengths and weaknesses of the Universal Negro Improvement Association during its peak years.

Chapter IV, "Elijah Muhammad And The Nation Of Islam (1930-1947)," provides a brief overview of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, reviews the origins of the Nation of Islam, and scrutinizes the trials of "Messenger Muhammad" and his organization prior to the conversion of Malcolm X. Chapter V, "Voices From The Past," creates a dialogue between Garvey and Muhammad. In this chapter, the researcher poses questions that allow Garvey and Muhammad to elaborate on their specific solutions to the woes of black

people, thereby accentuating the differences between the philosophies and programs of both leaders. This chapter utilizes direct quotations from both leaders to answer the questions posed. Chapter VI, "A Critical Analysis Of Garvey And Muhammad," examines parts of the hypothetical dialogue from Chapter V, adds more insight concerning Garvey and Muhammad from an analytical perspective, and briefly summarizes the entire thesis.

---

Notes

## Chapter I

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the paper, the author has chosen to preface the names of Marcus Garvey and Elijah Muhammad with the title of Honorable. Typically, these titles are reserved for statesmen, high-ranking politicians, and respected individuals. The author uses the title for both Garvey and Muhammad, not only because they viewed themselves as leaders of black nations, but also, because the author respects the efforts of both men on behalf of black people.

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Porter, *Early Negro Writing 1760-1837* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1995), 257-64.

<sup>3</sup> Nasir Makr Hakim, ed., *The True History of Elijah Muhammad* (Atlanta: M.E.M.P.S. Publication Co., 1997), 37.

<sup>4</sup> E.U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Webster's Third New World International Dictionary* (1993), s.v. "racism."



## CHAPTER II

### THE FACTS VERSUS THE THEORIES

The broadest facts array the most false lies against themselves, for they bring error from under cover.

Master Fard Muhammad

On November 20, 1932, a man named Robert Harris performed a human sacrifice in his Detroit, Michigan apartment located at 1249 Dubois Street. According to police reports, the victim, James Smith, voluntarily submitted to the wishes of Harris, when he allowed Harris to stab him through the heart on a makeshift sacrificial altar. Then, on January 20, 1937, also in the city of Detroit, police arrested Verlene McQueen, allegedly, just as he was about to “sacrifice and cook” his wife and his daughter in the name of Allah.<sup>1</sup> These incidents and rumors of similar happenings caused the initial ostracism of all adherents to Islam during the 1930s. In fact, the ritual of human sacrifice performed by Robert Harris caused the Detroit Police Department to label the Nation of Islam, one of several Islamic organizations in Detroit at that time, as a “voodoo cult” and prompted the police to place the organization under surveillance. In 1938, when Erdmann D. Beynon completed the first known examination of the Nation of Islam, “The Voodoo Cult Among Negro Migrants in Detroit,” he admittedly utilized police reports to inspire the title of his article and to explain the origins of the Nation of Islam.<sup>2</sup>

In Beynon’s article, however, several discrepancies exist which damage the veracity of his study. First, Beynon stated that the name of the founder of the Nation of Islam “is

uncertain,” yet he offered several names that Master Fard Muhammad supposedly used, including Mr. Farrad Mohammad, Mr. F.M. Ali, Professor Ford and Mr. Wali Farrad. The name of Professor Ford, the only non-Arabic name listed, is the name that has allowed subsequent scholars, erroneously, to link Master Fard Muhammad to the UNIA and to the Los Angeles Police Department. After listing some invalid names for the person of Wallace Fard Muhammad along with the real names, Beynon then quoted one of the first followers of Master Fard Muhammad, who stated that Master Fard Muhammad himself said, “My name is W.D. Fard . . .”<sup>3</sup>

If one of Fard’s first followers gave Beynon Fard’s name, why did Beynon obfuscate his article by mentioning other pseudonyms for Master Fard Muhammad? Secondly, Beynon conceded in the notes of his article that the police had grouped all Muslim movements in the same category, despite their varying philosophies and agendas.<sup>4</sup> Just by admitting this point, Beynon cast doubt on his own ensuing claim that Robert Harris, the demented man previously mentioned, was a member of the Nation of Islam. In his article, Beynon characterized Robert Harris as an ardent member of the Nation of Islam, referencing Harris by the name of Robert Karriem. By referring to Harris by the Muslim name of Karriem, Beynon cleverly established a link between Elijah Muhammad and Robert Harris, since Master Fard Muhammad initially had named Elijah Muhammad, Elijah Karriem.<sup>5</sup>

Thirdly, in the article, Beynon stated that Master Fard Muhammad’s position on the “question of human sacrifice was never made clear.” The police reports contradicted Beynon’s claim, nevertheless, stating that, upon being questioned, Master Fard Muhammad “categorically denied having instructed anyone to sacrifice human beings in

the name of religion.”<sup>6</sup> If Harris had been acting under the orders of Master Fard Muhammad, it seems more likely that he would have sacrificed a white person instead of a black person because the catechism of the Nation of Islam contained a part that mentioned the killing of four devils. In order to vindicate the Nation of Islam of any implication in Harris’ bizarre immolation of James Smith, nevertheless, one must determine to what organization Harris belonged. According to Beynon, Harris was a member of the Nation of Islam. When questioned by the police, however, Harris referred to himself as “the king of The Order of Islam,” and he mentioned the name “Bey.”<sup>7</sup>

Beynon failed to include these details in his article for a reason. In my opinion, Beynon proved himself to be as prejudiced as the police with regards to the various Islamic sects in Detroit, Michigan during the 1930s. The name “Bey” unequivocally linked Harris to the Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) founded by Noble Drew Ali in 1913. Still Harris must be considered an anomaly because the MSTA never taught its members to sacrifice humans.<sup>8</sup> Since the Detroit Police Department failed to differentiate between the MSTA and the Nation of Islam, nevertheless, the media typified the Nation of Islam as a malevolent organization and caused credulous Negroes to view the organization as a pariah and a dangerous form of nationalism.

Finally, in his article, Beynon perpetrated the most common mistake in contemporary studies on black nationalism:

The story of the Nation of Islam cannot be considered as complete in itself. Militant and cultist movements among migrant Negroes in the cities of the North have formed a sort of tree. After one branch has grown, flourished, and begun to decay, another shoots up to begin over again the same cycle, though always with an increasing degree of race-consciousness and anti-Caucasian prejudice. Out of the wreck of the Marcus Garvey movement, there sprang Phoenix-like the Moorish-American cult of which the prophet was Noble Drew

Ali. After this prophet's disappearance and the stabilization of the movement as a formally organized denomination, there sprung the Nation of Islam.<sup>9</sup>

In this statement, Beynon made a couple of mistakes which subsequent scholars and historians repeated. First, he claimed that Noble Drew Ali's movement evolved from the wreck of Marcus Garvey's movement. Reputedly, Noble Drew Ali started the MSTA in 1913, while Marcus Garvey organized the first branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association in the United States in 1917. So, Beynon contorted the chronology of the origins of both organizations. After Garvey established the UNIA in the United States, Noble Drew Ali did adopt some of his ideas and incorporated them into the MSTA's holy book, *The Koran*, but chronologically, Ali's movement preceded Garvey's movement.<sup>10</sup>

If one were to speculate as to why Beynon convoluted the organizations' chronological origins, one would come to the conclusion that, like the Detroit Police Department, Beynon viewed all Islamic movements through the same lens. Accordingly, this rationale necessitated that the Nation of Islam and the Moorish Science Temple of America be grouped together and represented as scions of Garveyism. Some historians and scholars have focused their attention on the similarities of these movements for the purpose of accentuating the specific continuities in black nationalist thought. To contend that all black nationalist movements belong to the same tree, however, erroneously and illogically supports the idea that all nationalist movements belong to the same tree. The facts demand that each movement receive a niche of its own. Logic demands that one understand Garvey's movement as one tree and Muhammad's movement as another tree. Indeed, some scholars have twisted the facts of history to create theories that characterize the NOI as evolving from the UNIA. Beynon's study introduced some facts concerning

the Nation of Islam, but he merged these facts with his ethnocentric ideas to create dubious theories regarding the relatedness of all black nationalist movements.

Moreover, since subsequent academic studies on the Nation of Islam drew from Beynon's article of 1938, they commit some gross errors with respect to the origins of the Nation of Islam. In fact, some scholars have grouped studies of the Nation of Islam into specific theoretical categories, suggesting that they purposely vitiate the historicity of black nationalist movements under the guise of scholarship. For example, in his 1944 book, *Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro Religious Cults in the Urban North*, Arthur H. Fauset proclaimed that "The Black Muslims are directly descended from the Moorish Science Temple."<sup>11</sup> This notion propagated by Fauset in 1944 represents one theoretical school of thought among academicians, concerning the ancestry of the Nation of Islam. Fauset, nevertheless, provided no proof to substantiate his claims. Rather, Fauset presented a comparative study of the extant religious organizations among black people in the United States, emphasizing a particular strain of thought which exemplified black people's propensity for self-reliance. If one simply accepted Fauset's above-mentioned theory without investigating the facts, one would find oneself gravely misinformed about the origins of the Nation of Islam. To state that "the Nation of Islam directly descended from the Moorish Science Temple" is to assert that Master Fard Muhammad followed Noble Drew Ali. Proponents of this theory, primarily, point to both movements' description of black people as "Asiatics" to support their contention. Also, the advocates of this hypothesis stress the Islamic tradition of both movements.

Indeed, both movements claimed Allah as their God and referred to black people as "Asiatics," but these two similarities alone cannot corroborate the claim that the Moorish

Science Temple of America produced the Nation of Islam. The “Moors,” as Noble Drew Ali also referred to his followers, pledged allegiance and obedience to the flag of the United States. The Moors referred to white people as Europeans or palefaces. The Moors claimed Morocco as the “Nation” for black people in the United States. The Moors considered Noble Drew Ali to be a “kindred personage and spirit to Confucius, Jesus, Buddha, and Zoroaster.” The Moors taught that the guiding spirit of the universe is love; finally, the Moors claimed “Marcus Garvey was to Noble Drew Ali as John the Baptist was to Christ.”<sup>12</sup> In contrast, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad repudiated Buddhism. Muhammad denounced the idea of universal love, and he referred to white people as devils. Finally, Muhammad condemned the United States’ flag. These differences cast doubt on Fauset’s claim that the Nation of Islam descended from the MSTA.

What is interesting about the doctrine of the Moors, though, is the prominence of the Honorable Marcus Garvey. Since Garvey did not enter the United States until 1916, his importance in the doctrine of the Moorish Science Temple of America had to be a feature added later by Noble Drew Ali. In my opinion, Noble Drew Ali venerated Marcus Garvey in order to attract the same type of audience that Garvey attracted. Ali’s movement began three years prior to Garvey’s arrival, but the MSTA did not draw much attention until Garvey had made his presence felt in the United States.<sup>13</sup> The factual establishment of a conjunction between Noble Drew Ali’s MSTA and Garvey’s UNIA allowed scholars, after Fauset, to invent a tie between the Honorable Marcus Garvey’s UNIA and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s Nation of Islam. Because of the retrograde nature of historical scholarship, academicians tend to develop theories

progressively. For example, first, Erdmann D. Beynon stated that the MSTA sprang from the UNIA; then, Arthur H. Fauset claimed that the Nation of Islam descended from the MSTA. From this entanglement, future scholars followed the theoretical progression and erroneously, but logically, inferred that the Nation of Islam derived from the UNIA.

Consequently, scholars found themselves able to theorize about the founder of the Nation of Islam, Master Fard Muhammad, due to Beynon's and Fauset's scholastic negligence. In 1945, when Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy published the book, *They Seek A City*, they built upon the theories initiated by Beynon and Fauset. In this book, the authors inveigle the unwary reader with an erroneous amalgamation of details focusing upon the death of Noble Drew Ali and the beginning of the Nation of Islam:

After Drew Ali's death the prophet's attorney attempted unsuccessfully to hold the group together. Each among several of the prophet's disciples announced that he alone was the rightful inheritor of Drew Ali's leadership—each established a little temple of his own. More than one sought to lend additional weight to his claim by professing to be the reincarnation of the prophet. The following quotations from a sermon by a minister of the Chicago Temple of Islam outline certain primary beliefs of the sect, founded in Detroit sometime before 1930 by a Negro peddler: "the Asiatic black man is the original man, the ruler of the universe, . . . We're not afraid of the devil. . . . They're afraid of you if you've got the Truth. Just tell 'em, White man, you're a devil. . . . He won't deny it, 'cause it's true. . . . I am W.D. Fard," the peddler told those whom he sought to proselytize.<sup>14</sup>

In the above quote, Bontemps and Conroy blatantly misrepresented the beginnings of the Nation of Islam by associating Master Fard Muhammad to the Moorish Science Temple. According to Arthur H. Fauset, Arna Bontemps helped him with his examination of the Moorish Science Temple of America, and undoubtedly this collaboration evidenced itself in Conroy and Bontemps' book which concentrates on black people's migrations from the South to the North.

In the quote, Bontemps and Conroy made some groundless statements that would lead gullible readers to draw unfounded conclusions. First, the authors mentioned the death of Noble Drew Ali. Second, the authors spoke of Ali's disciples squabbling over succession, thus causing a dispersion of temples in Ali's name. Third, the authors claimed that some of these followers professed to be the reincarnation of Noble Drew Ali. Fourth, the authors quoted from a sermon by Master Fard Muhammad, thereby leading indiscreet readers to view Master Fard Muhammad as a follower of Noble Drew Ali. Finally, the authors stated that this minister represented a sect of the Chicago Temple of Islam founded before 1930 in Detroit, thus again insinuating that Master Fard Muhammad adhered to the teachings of Noble Drew Ali. Later, this thesis will show how this idea has pervaded the more recent scholarship on the Nation of Islam and black nationalism in general. For now, though, the thesis focuses on the inaccuracy of the information in the above-mentioned quote.

Undoubtedly, the authors purposely mentioned Chicago because Noble Drew Ali based his organization out of this city. Then, in the same sentence, the authors mentioned Detroit because Master Fard Muhammad conceived the Nation of Islam in this city. Finally, in the same sentence, the authors stated that the sect was founded before 1930 by a Negro peddler, thus implying that Master Fard Muhammad founded a new movement which only branched from Ali's movement. According to the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Master Fard Muhammad did not reveal himself until July 4, 1930.<sup>15</sup> So, actually, not only did the authors misinform readers by suggesting that Master Fard Muhammad began teaching before 1930, but also, the authors concocted another theory by associating Master Fard Muhammad to those disciples of Noble Drew Ali who



claimed to be Ali reincarnated. Later, the thesis discusses this theory, but for now, the purpose is to highlight the sources of misinformation concerning the person of Master Fard Muhammad.

Between 1938 and 1950, the three scholarly studies examined thus far represented the only academic works dealing with the Nation of Islam. Before 1951, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had not granted any historians or scholars the opportunity to interview him concerning the birth and ideology of the Nation of Islam. Therefore, one might be tempted to blame the errors of Beynon, Fauset, Bontemps and Conroy on the fact that they did not interview Muhammad or on their inability to probe the inner machinations of the Nation of Islam. In 1951, however, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad permitted Hatim Sahib to interview him extensively for Sahib's Master's thesis, "The Nation of Islam."<sup>16</sup> The importance and use of Sahib's thesis in the most recent scholarship about the origins of the Nation of Islam hint that Sahib perpetuated many of the theories concerning the person of Master Fard Muhammad. In the foreword of the *True History of Master Fard Muhammad*, Minister Nasir Makr Hakim included the following text from Sahib's thesis, concerning the person of Master Fard Muhammad:

Two myths stand out. To Elijah Muhammad (later the leader of the movement), he declared himself a member of the royal dynasty of the Hashimide Sheriffs of Mecca, while to Elijah's wife, Clara, he apparently stated that he was a member of the tribe of Koreish (the prophet Mohammad's tribe).<sup>17</sup>

This single quote elucidates three points about Sahib's methodology: First, Sahib claimed that two myths existed, and since he interviewed the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, unsuspecting readers might believe that Muhammad himself related these "two myths" to Sahib. Second, Sahib divided one theory into halves, concerning the

ancestry of Master Fard Muhammad, by passing the “Hashimide Sheriffs” account as separate from the “Koreish” account. Third, Sahib seemingly attempted to divide the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and his wife by claiming that Master Fard Muhammad told them different stories concerning his lineage. Sahib’s thesis represented the only comprehensive study of the Nation of Islam in the 1950s, and despite Sahib’s access to sensitive and personal information, the history of Master Fard Muhammad and his founding of the Nation of Islam still did not receive a just and fair portrayal.

By the late 1950s, the Nation of Islam had increased in size and had captured the attention of the national media. After Mike Wallace interviewed the Honorable Elijah Muhammad in 1959, sundry scholars seized the opportunity to research the Nation of Islam and to question Muhammad about the origin, history, and philosophy of the organization. In 1961, C. Eric Lincoln’s book, *The Black Muslims in America*, offered the reading public and academia the first in depth view of the Nation of Islam in the 1960s. By the 1960s, Muhammad had begun to accommodate journalists, reporters, and researchers in their efforts to understand the ascendancy of the NOI. After all, the publicity only strengthened the Nation of Islam and lured more converts to its meetings and temples. Most historians consider C. Eric Lincoln’s book on the Nation of Islam to be a classic on the subject. Admittedly, as one of the first academic studies on the subject of black nationalism and the NOI, this book proves to be valuable to understanding the internal and hierarchical structure of the Nation of Islam.

The major shortcoming of this book, nevertheless, centers upon its details concerning the origin of the Nation of Islam and the person of Master Fard Muhammad. Inevitably, since Lincoln partially depended upon Erdmann D. Beynon’s article, his book

contains many of the same flaws that Beynon presented in 1938. Lincoln, though, added more details and conjecture to further mystify Master Fard Muhammad:

There was a proliferation of legends about so mysterious a figure. One such legend is that Fard was a Jamaican Negro whose father was a Syrian Moslem. Another describes him as a Palestinian Arab who had participated in various racial agitations in India, South Africa and London before moving on to Detroit. Some of his followers believed him to be the son of wealthy parents of the tribe of Koreish—the tribe of Mohammed, founder of classical Islam. Others say that he was educated at a London university in preparation for a diplomatic career in the service of the kingdom of Hejaz, . . . At the other extreme, a Chicago newspaper investigating the Black Muslim Movement refers to Fard as a “Turkish born Nazi agent who worked for Hitler in World War II.”<sup>18</sup>

In the first line, Lincoln prepared readers to be confused by the mystique of Master Fard Muhammad. In the second line, Lincoln shrewdly linked Master Fard Muhammad to Jamaica, thus permitting readers to deduce that a possible link existed between the Honorable Marcus Garvey and Master Fard Muhammad. In the next sentence, Lincoln basically characterized Master Fard Muhammad as a well-traveled agitator. Then, in the next sentence, Lincoln gave readers the verifiable information that he obtained from the study by Erdmann Beynon, who solicited it from one of Master Fard’s earliest converts.<sup>19</sup> Finally, Lincoln mentioned the “extreme” notion that Master Fard worked for Hitler during World War II. Lincoln referred to this last “legend” as extreme, implying that he himself did not believe this myth when juxtaposed to the previously mentioned accounts. Later in the book, Lincoln indicates that Talib Ahmad Dawud, a bitter rival of Elijah Muhammad and an Ahmadiyyan, Islamic convert, created this legend in 1959 in an attempt to discredit the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and to support the Ahmadiyyan agenda.<sup>20</sup>

Also, later in his book, Lincoln distorted the chronology regarding the organization of Temple No. 2 in Chicago, and he introduced some speculation concerning the relationship of Master Fard Muhammad and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad:

In 1932, Muhammad (Elijah) established the Southside Mosque—later called Temple No. 2—in Chicago and apparently ran it for some time. The following year, when Fard was trying to elude the police, he sought refuge with Muhammad in Chicago. A Detroit Muslim had been convicted in 1932 of a sacrificial killing of one of his brothers. . . . Muhammad's willingness to conceal Fard and brave the law for his sake cemented their mutual trust and respect. . . . Before long, he was charged by Fard with full administrative responsibility for the Movement and was being groomed as Fard's successor. . . . Some of his antagonists rejected his second rechristening (from Elijah Karriem to Elijah Muhammad). When Fard disappeared in June 1934, with Muhammad as his logical successor, they immediately spread rumors that Muhammad had induced Fard to offer himself as a human sacrifice. Fard was still considered a prophet, not an incarnation of Allah and it was a common belief among his followers that a Muslim who immolated himself could become "Savior of the world."<sup>21</sup>

The first discrepancy deals with the date of establishment for Temple No. 2 in Chicago. According to Lincoln, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had run this temple for some time. The time, readers must remember, was 1932. According to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, however, he did not move to Chicago until 1934.<sup>22</sup>

So, how could Master Fard Muhammad have sought refuge with Elijah Muhammad a year later in Chicago (1933), when Elijah lived in Detroit at that time? What Lincoln actually did by contorting the chronology was to leave room for the supposed link to Noble Drew Ali's Moorish Science Temple of America, which had waned after its prophet's death in 1929. Next, Lincoln stated that Master Fard Muhammad was trying to elude the police, but the evidence proves that Master Fard submitted himself to the police willingly in Detroit in 1932. Of course, the "sacrificial killing" that Lincoln mentioned refers to the Robert Harris incident discussed earlier. Then, discussing the disappearance

of Master Fard Muhammad in 1934, Lincoln introduced another theory concerning Master Fard. In this instance, Lincoln exercised some historical creativity by alleging that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's antagonists believed that he had induced Fard to immolate himself to become Savior. Perhaps Lincoln invented this story to connect the Nation of Islam to the deranged Robert Harris, for no evidence exists to support such an insinuation. Besides, the immolation that Lincoln suggested would contradict the very teachings of Master Fard Muhammad himself, since Master Fard taught Elijah Muhammad to question the validity of a God who would sacrifice his son to save the world from its sins.

In 1962, E.U. Essien-Udom, a Nigerian, published another book on the Nation of Islam entitled *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America*. Essien-Udom's book delved even more deeply into the internal workings of the Nation of Islam than did Lincoln's book. In fact, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad allowed this particular researcher the opportunity "to dine" with him and his family on "several occasions." Whereas, Lincoln's book focused more on the leadership and the social aspects of the NOI, Essien-Udom's book more pronouncedly elicited the voice of the rank and file members and disclosed in detail the ideological aspects of the NOI. Essien-Udom's analysis, though, like all the studies presented thus far, preserved the myths concerning Master Fard Muhammad and committed too many errors with respect to the background of Elijah Muhammad. In the first chapter, for example, Essien-Udom gave the wrong date, 1933, for the disappearance of Master Fard Muhammad. In the same chapter, Essien-Udom also misinformed the reader about the year when the Honorable Elijah Muhammad met Master Fard Muhammad.<sup>23</sup>

In the second chapter, “The Nationalist Tradition,” Essien-Udom introduced the subjects of Noble Drew Ali and the Moorish Science Temple of America. He briefly explained the origins of the MTSA, its rise and its fall. Essien-Udom correctly attributed the fall of the MSTTA to the death of its prophet, Noble Drew Ali. Subsequent to this explication, though, Essien-Udom described a transition of power from Noble Drew Ali to Master Fard Muhammad:

He (Noble Drew Ali) died under mysterious circumstances. . . . For some time, one W.D. Fard assumed leadership of the Moorish movement. According to Bontemps and Conroy, Fard claimed that he was the reincarnation of Noble Drew Ali. By 1930 a permanent split developed in the movement. One faction, the Moors, remains faithful to Noble Drew Ali, and the other, which is now led by Elijah Muhammad, remains faithful to Prophet Fard. . . . leaders of the Nation of Islam have emphatically denied any past connection whatsoever of Elijah Muhammad, Master Wallace Fard Muhammad, or their movement with Nobel [sic] Drew Ali’s Moorish Science Temple.<sup>24</sup>

In this quote, Essien-Udom first stated that Fard assumed leadership of the Moorish movement. Then, the author attempted to absolve himself of any culpability for this historical inaccuracy by immediately referring to Bontemps and Conroy, who devised the “reincarnation” theory. At the end of this quote, Essien-Udom gave the Nation of Islam’s response to the allegations. Undoubtedly, Essien-Udom accepted the theories of Bontemps and Conroy, instead of believing the words of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and other leaders in the NOI.

Bontemps and Conroy’s *They Seek A City*, which this thesis mentioned earlier, allocated only seven pages to the early history of the Nation of Islam. Furthermore, Bontemps and Conroy did not document any of their claims, nor did they interview the Honorable Elijah Muhammad because Muhammad was in prison when they published their book in 1945. Certainly, Bontemps and Conroy did not receive their information

from Master Fard Muhammad himself; therefore, their claims, which Essien-Udom used in his book, lack evidentiary authenticity. A few pages later in his book, nevertheless, Essien-Udom proved that he accepted the undocumented theories of Bontemps and Conroy rather than the facts with which the Honorable Elijah Muhammad personally supplied him:

It has already been indicated that upon the death of Noble Drew Ali, one W.D. Fard claimed that he was Drew Ali reincarnated. Fard founded a Temple in Detroit in 1930.<sup>25</sup>

With this short excerpt, Essien-Udom completed his transition from the Moorish Science Temple of America to the Nation of Islam. Afterwards, he drew from the fallible account of Erdmann D. Beynon by listing the various names that Master Fard Muhammad supposedly used, again, including the name of Professor Ford. Essien-Udom demonstrated his ambivalence towards certain aspects of the Nation of Islam's history, as told to him by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, because Essien-Udom continued to offer false information. In one instance in Chapter Two, Essien-Udom stated that the Chicago branch was founded in the latter part of 1933 or 1934, which contradicted what he stated in Chapter One. Moreover, he included Beynon's obviously mistaken rendition of Elijah Muhammad's background, which listed Elijah Muhammad's "slave name" as Robert Poole. Then, Essien-Udom stated that Master Fard Muhammad disappeared for good in 1933, again, contradicting what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad told him.<sup>26</sup>

Even in the section where Essien-Udom described the background of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he gave readers the wrong dates for Muhammad's birth and his period of incarceration. Also, Essien Udom misinformed readers concerning Muhammad's employment, stating that Elijah worked as a deliveryman for a dairy

company in Chicago and that he was a Baptist minister.<sup>27</sup> One has to question the scholarly motives of Essien-Udom and other historians, especially, when the errors become so glaring as the ones mentioned. When questioned about Essien-Udom's book, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad gave the following response:

We have some good in there, but I could easily classify him with the hasty writers. He's too hasty in what he wants to write, and probably would write correctly, but he wants to hurry and get [his work] on the market. [Also] Eric Lincoln, they both have very good things in their writing, [but] show undeveloped knowledge of just what's what; that I don't detest so, I just classify it as people who want to write.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, in 1963 when Louis E. Lomax wrote his book, *When The Word Is Given*, he proliferated the same myths, concerning the conception of the Nation of Islam and the history of its founder, that previous scholars had initiated. In fact, in his introduction, Lomax conceded that C. Eric Lincoln's book "was my bible as I tried first to understand and then portray the Black Muslims." This fact became evident as soon as Lomax attempted to explain the origins of the Nation of Islam. Since Lomax's book lacks documentation, one cannot consider it to be a definitive historical study, although his book received acclaim in academic and journalistic circles. Instead of examining the blunders continued by Lomax, which stemmed from his direct quoting of C. Eric Lincoln's book, this thesis highlights a few errors that Lomax committed with respect to the relationship of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and Master Fard Muhammad. Perhaps readers not only will recognize the continuity of unsubstantiated theories from the previous scholarship, but also, they will grasp how each succeeding scholar embellished these same theories in his/her own unique way.

In the following excerpt, Lomax gives his account of the first meeting and ensuing relationship between Elijah Muhammad and Master Fard Muhammad:



In 1930 Poole attended one of the house meetings and heard Fard; . . . Almost from the onset Fard and Poole seemed to become fast friends. Early members of the sect have stated that Elijah Poole became something of an errand boy for Fard and also helped him publish a newspaper. The key fact in the relationship between Elijah Poole and Fard was time. Poole came into the movement at the moment police in Detroit were breathing down Fard's neck . . . Elijah Poole was tapped by Fard as the first Chief Minister of Islam and given the coveted "original name" Muhammad. Earlier in 1932, three years after he joined the movement, Elijah Muhammad went to Chicago and established what has since become known as Temple Number Two . . . Trouble in Detroit, however, seems to have cut short Muhammad's sojourn in Chicago.<sup>29</sup>

In the first line, Lomax gave the wrong date for the meeting of Master Fard Muhammad and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. According to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he met Master Fard Muhammad in the early fall of 1931.<sup>30</sup> Next, Lomax claimed that Elijah joined the movement just when Fard encountered difficulties with the police. Master Fard Muhammad first experienced trouble with the police, though, after Robert Harris immolated James Smith on November 20, 1932. So, Lomax contradicted himself with this statement because Elijah had been in the movement for over a year by that time.

Then, Lomax further confused the date of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's conversion, when he mentioned that, three years prior to 1932, Elijah Muhammad had entered the movement and opened Temple Number Two in Chicago. If this statement were true, then Elijah Muhammad would have opened a temple in Chicago in 1929, prior to meeting Master Fard Muhammad. Apparently, Lomax distorted the chronology in order to corroborate the spurious notion that the Nation of Islam derived from the Moorish Science Temple of America. As a reminder, Noble Drew Ali died in the year of 1929, the same year that Elijah Muhammad allegedly opened a temple in Chicago. So, in an effort to allow Fauset, Bontemps, and Conroy's theories to endure, Lomax garbled the

chronology with regards to the date when the Honorable Elijah Muhammad joined the Nation of Islam.

At the beginning of this chapter, this thesis mentioned the eccentricity of the name, Professor Ford, as the only non-Islamic name included among the list of pseudonyms for Master Fard Muhammad. In 1964, when Howard Brotz published his book, *The Black Jews of Harlem*, he introduced a new theory concerning the person of Master Fard Muhammad, which centered upon the name Ford. Brotz's book permitted future academicians to assert that the Nation of Islam branched from the Honorable Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. As a reminder, Erdmann Beynon broached the name "Professor Ford" in 1938, but he did not associate the name with any organization. In 1964, Brotz endeavored to give credence to the name of Ford as a legitimate name for Master Fard Muhammad.

When discussing the important figures in "Harlem's Black Jewish" community, Brotz provided the reader with the following details:

Perhaps the most interesting and important of all these early figures was a man named Arnold Ford, whose origins and ultimate destiny are shrouded in the usual obscurity that attends new prophets. The testimony of those who knew him personally is that he was a man of unusual intelligence . . . Like many of the Black Jews, he was attracted to the "Back to Africa" movement of Marcus Garvey which had a spectacular rise during the early twenties. He was the musical director of Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the Garvey movement in New York. Garveyism did not coincide exactly with his own outlook, for Garvey rejected his counsel to adopt Judaism as the Negro's religion . . . Legend or hearsay has it that Ford, tiring of Judaism, emigrated in the early thirties to Africa where he became a Muslim and where he subsequently died. As this was in the midst of the depression and passage money would be rather scarce, it is equally possible and even more plausible that he emigrated not to Africa but to Detroit, and that the W. Fard, Ford, or Farrad who founded the Islamic cult in that city and Arnold Ford were one and the same. This, of course, can be only speculative.<sup>31</sup>

With this quote, Brotz temporarily interrupted the theories which proposed that the Nation of Islam descended from the Moorish Science Temple of America. Surely, after this statement, researchers could propagate the theory that the Nation of Islam developed from the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Actually, the person that Brotz referred to in this passage was Rabbi Arnold J. Ford, and truthfully, Ford did direct the choir of the UNIA. Brotz began hypothesizing, though, as soon as he mentioned the word “legend.” The truth of the matter is that Rabbi Arnold J. Ford emigrated from America and settled in Ethiopia in 1930 to practice Judaism among the native Ethiopian Jews.<sup>32</sup>

This date coincided with the year that Master Fard Muhammad revealed himself in Detroit, Michigan, suggesting that Rabbi Ford’s departure allowed sociological theorists, such as Erdmann D. Beynon, to usurp his name and append it to the list of pseudonyms for Master Fard Muhammad. Brotz absolved himself of any historical inaccuracy by claiming that his statement was mere speculation, but his claim succeeded in creating another mystery concerning the person of Master Fard Muhammad. Possibly, by linking Master Fard Muhammad to the name “Ford,” Brotz attempted to corroborate some information on the Nation of Islam contained in the files of the Los Angeles Police Department and the FBI.

In 1963, the year prior to the release of Brotz’s book, the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* printed an article which alleged that the founder of the Nation of Islam was a former narcotics abuser, drug peddler, and a white man. The article, one of several schemes devised by Jay Edgar Hoover to malign and vilify the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, contained mendacious information about Master

Fard Muhammad and his supposed criminal background. The article also reprinted a photo of a man named Wallace Dodd Ford, who the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) had convicted of the crimes mentioned in the article and had sentenced to serve time at San Quentin prison. Furthermore, the article claimed that the photo represented a picture of the founder of the Nation of Islam. The published photo, taken upon Ford's release from San Quentin in 1929, bears no resemblance to the actual photo of Master Fard Muhammad, which the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had in his possession.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, some of the most recent scholarship has accepted this photo as being the picture of Master Fard Muhammad.

Ultimately then, by using Rabbi Arnold J. Ford's name, Brotz's speculation about Master Fard Muhammad lent some credibility to ensuing scholars' claims that the name "Ford" was a legitimate alias of Master Fard Muhammad. When critically analyzed, the scholars who have investigated the Nation of Islam's origin seem to have purposely confused the facts regarding the person of Master Fard Muhammad. Brotz's book not only linked Master Fard Muhammad to the name "Ford," but also, this book linked Master Fard Muhammad to the Black Jews of Harlem, the UNIA, and the LAPD. The intentional misrepresentation of the facts from 1938 to 1964, in the opinion of the researcher, prove conclusively that academicians have abetted the federal, state, and local agencies in their attempts to conceal the truth from the public with respect to the Nation of Islam.

In order to dispute the barrage of innuendoes, fabrications, and misinformation, in 1965, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad published his first book, *Message To The Blackman in America*, which enumerated his teachings for black people in the United

States. Prior to this publication, Muhammad had published only two volumes of *The Supreme Wisdom*, which are pamphlets/booklets containing the basic concepts of his teachings, and a spate of newspaper articles in *Muhammad Speaks*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and other newspapers. Thus, the publication of *Message To The Blackman in America* proved to be the Nation of Islam's most significant written work, for this book contested academicians, rebuked and admonished Elijah Muhammad's apostates, castigated "Negro" leadership, and answered some of Muhammad's critics. Simultaneously, this book afforded "disbelievers" an opportunity to judge the Nation of Islam's doctrine for themselves.

Then in 1973, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad published *The Fall of America*, which prognosticated the eventual doom of the United States. Finally, in 1974, "Messenger Muhammad" published *Our Savior Has Arrived*, which defended the missions of himself and Master Fard Muhammad. In this book, Muhammad utilized a panoply of Biblical and Qur'anic references to support and augment the claim that his program was the chosen solution to the problems of black people. Perhaps readers will notice the well-planned timing of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's publications. In 1964, the schismatic nature of Elijah Muhammad's relationship with Malcolm X became a primary topic of interest in the media. Then, after Malcolm's assassination in 1965, academic studies focused their attention more on the legacy of Malcolm X than they did on the Nation of Islam. So, between 1965 and 1974, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad filled the void created by the rift between Malcolm and himself with publications defending his teacher, the Nation of Islam, and himself. The media's focus on Malcolm X--the individual—accounts for the dearth of scholarship on the Nation of Islam between

1965 and 1974. Similarly, the media's diversion to Malcolm from Elijah compelled the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to publish his own books.

Interestingly enough, the timing of Muhammad's publications provides a convenient, historical juncture for this thesis' comparative examination of the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. As a reminder, Howard Brotz's book of 1964 added to the theories about the origins of the Nation of Islam by associating Master Fard Muhammad to the UNIA via Rabbi Arnold J. Ford. Prior to 1964, all of the studies had linked the origins of the Nation of Islam to the Moorish Science Temple of America, thus only associating the Nation of Islam to the Universal Negro Improvement Association indirectly. Brotz's *The Black Jews of Harlem*, however, became the first book to link the Nation of Islam directly to the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Afterwards, during the period 1965-1974, academic studies shifted their focus from the Nation of Islam to the legacy of Malcolm X, whose father was a member of the UNIA, and to the evolution of the "Black Power" movement. This shift in focus permitted scholars, from 1971 onward, to affirm that the NOI evolved from the UNIA.

Prior to the 1970s, very few scholars had investigated the life and legacy of the Honorable Marcus Garvey. After Garvey's death in 1940, Len Nembhard published his book, *Trials and Triumphs of Marcus Garvey*. This book, however, concentrated on Garvey's experiences in the West Indies. Next, in 1955, Edmund D. Cronon wrote the seminal work on Garvey's experiment with black nationalism in the United States, *Black Moses*, and in this book, Cronon focused solely on the legacy of Garvey. Not once did Cronon mention Master Fard Muhammad, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, or the Nation of Islam. In 1969, the Honorable Marcus Garvey's second wife, Amy Jacques

Garvey, compiled and edited the second edition of *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, which she first published in 1923. As a reminder, the “Black Power” movement peaked during the period 1965-1974. Therefore, academicians wrote many books that concentrated on this phenomenon termed “Black Power.” Inevitably, the Honorable Marcus Garvey received coronation as the father of the “Black Power” movement. Concurrently, academicians compartmentalized all black nationalist movements in the same space, thereby making Garvey the progenitor of all such twentieth century movements.

In 1971, for example, Theodore G. Vincent’s book, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement*, credited the Universal Negro Improvement Association with producing the Nation of Islam. Vincent stated, “The Black Muslims were an outgrowth of the UNIA, as were most black nationalist organizations formed in the thirties and forties.”<sup>34</sup> When Vincent said that the NOI was an outgrowth of the UNIA, he plainly told readers that the former branched from the latter. If such a claim were true, should not the claim be verifiable? Later in Vincent’s book, nevertheless, readers discover what Vincent meant by outgrowth when he stated, “Other nationalist defections came in the form of escape to otherworldly movements: Noble Drew Ali’s Moorish American Science Temple [sic], Elijah Muhammad’s Nation of Islam.”<sup>35</sup> In this statement, Vincent asserted that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad defected from the UNIA, although he failed to produce any evidence to support his claim. Only later do readers discover from what source Vincent received his information:

By far the most important of these re-alliances was that of Elijah Poole. Poole, a corporal in the Chicago division, was one of many Garveyites attracted to Prophet Wallace Fard and his Nation of Islam . . . Poole replaced Fard as the leader of the movement in 1934 and, under the name Elijah Muhammad, had

some ten thousand Black Muslims by 1940. Fard's group was an offshoot of the Moorish American Science Temple [sic] of Noble Drew Ali.<sup>36</sup>

In this quote, Vincent referred to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's "re-alliance" with the Honorable Marcus Garvey because, earlier, he had identified Muhammad as a defector. In his notes, Vincent attributed his information, concerning Elijah Muhammad's position as a corporal, to a 1969 interview with Amy Jacques Garvey, second wife of the Honorable Marcus Garvey. This interview will be discussed later because, for now, the thesis merely intends to underscore indicators of Vincent's historical dereliction. First, Vincent referred to Elijah Muhammad by his "slave name" Poole, and Vincent suggested that, under his "slave name" of Poole, Elijah Muhammad was a corporal in the Chicago division of the UNIA. This thesis already documented that Elijah Muhammad did not move to Chicago until 1934.

Prior to this move, Muhammad lived in Detroit, Michigan, to where he had moved from the state of Georgia, which he left in 1923. Vincent's claim, then would be more credible if he had claimed that Elijah was a corporal in the Atlanta branch or the Detroit branch of the UNIA, but Vincent did not argue such an idea. When Elijah lived in Chicago, he already had been a member of the Nation of Islam for over three years. Certainly, Muhammad did not divide his duties between the Nation of Islam and a nearly defunct UNIA in 1934. So, it becomes incumbent upon Vincent to give readers a date in order to sustain his claim, but again, Vincent failed to give readers a date. Can Vincent's information be considered accurate without a date? As an historian, Vincent's conclusion must be grounded on documented, historical evidence.

Secondly, readers may notice Vincent's reordering of the name of Noble Drew Ali's Moorish Science Temple of America. Vincent incorrectly placed "American" as the



second word in the organization's name, thus rendering the Moorish Science Temple of America as the Moorish American Science Temple. Seemingly, one who has studied the history of the MSTA would not make such an obvious error of inversion. Finally, Vincent mentioned Elijah Muhammad's "re-alliance," and he used the following quote from E.U. Essien-Udom's *Black Nationalism* to support the notions of Elijah's past affiliation with the Universal Negro Improvement Association:

Muhammad acknowledged these connections in recruiting for the Muslims: "I have always had a very high opinion of both the late Noble Drew Ali and Marcus Garvey and admired their courage in helping our people (the so-called Negroes) and appreciated their work. Both of these men were fine Muslims. The followers of Noble Drew Ali and Marcus Garvey should now follow me and cooperate with us in our work because we are only trying to finish up what those before us started."<sup>37</sup>

Earlier, Vincent spoke about "re-alliances;" then, leading into this quote by Elijah Muhammad, Vincent credited Muhammad with acknowledging the connections (i.e., his re-alliance with Garvey) in order to facilitate his recruitment for the Nation of Islam. No where in the quote, though, did the Honorable Elijah Muhammad mention being a member of the MSTA or the UNIA. In fact, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad flatly denied any affiliation with the Moorish Science Temple of America, and he claimed that the Honorable Marcus Garvey lacked the knowledge to raise up black people out of their conditions as mental and spiritual slaves.<sup>38</sup> If the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had been a member of the UNIA, undoubtedly, he would have told E.U. Essien-Udom or any other person who interviewed him, but he never told anyone such information. So, where did Mrs. Garvey get this information that she passed on to Theodore Vincent?

Simply by following the progression of the scholarship on black nationalism, the researcher espied the answer to this question. In 1974, when Dr. John Henrik Clarke

edited the book, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, this publication also supported the supposition that the NOI branched from the UNIA. In the following quote, Mrs. Garvey revealed from whom she received her information, while discussing the “Black Power” movement:

Let us trace the source and course of Black Power . . . I propose to do so by submitting questions sent me by a student of research on the work of Marcus Garvey . . . Is there any connection between Marcus Garvey’s teachings and the philosophy of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X? Have Garvey’s teachings been corrupted? . . . This question can partially be answered by my quoting . . . Mr. Thomas Harvey, President-General of the UNIA to the Jamaica *Gleaner*, November 17, 1964 in which he said, “I think I am in a position to speak on behalf of Negroes in America and Canada, and to affirm our belief in the sincerity and courage of Marcus Garvey as the only international Negro leader at the close of this century. He paved the way for all local leaders who have emerged since his death. Most of them were his understudies or followers who were inspired by his dynamic leadership and the universality of his appeal for justice, equality and independence for the Negro peoples throughout the world. For instance Elijah Muhammad was formerly a corporal in the uniformed ranks of the Chicago division. Malcolm X’s father grew up under the influence of Garveyism.”<sup>39</sup>

Several details may be observed from this extensive excerpt. First, Thomas Harvey passed this unsubstantiated information to Amy Jacques Garvey who, in turn, passed it to Theodore Vincent and Dr. John Henrik Clarke who, then passed it to their readers, thus at best, making the information mere hearsay. Secondly, since no books before 1970 had made the same statement (i.e., that Elijah Muhammad was a corporal in the UNIA), one must question the motives of the informant, Thomas Harvey. Thirdly, Mrs. Garvey intimated that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad not only appropriated the Honorable Marcus Garvey’s philosophy, but also, she suggested that Muhammad corrupted the philosophy for his own purposes. Fourthly, Mrs. Garvey exculpated herself by quoting Mr. Thomas Harvey, who showed his nescience of and apathy towards the Nation of Islam and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, when he referred to black people as

Negroes. Fifthly, Mr. Harvey clearly fabricated another theory concerning the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, when he stated that he was a corporal in the Chicago division. As President-General, Mr. Harvey would have been in a position to verify this statement with some type of evidence (e.g., membership registration). Lastly, Mr. Harvey used the link between Malcolm X's father and the UNIA as evidence of a link between the UNIA and the NOI.

So, in an attempt to affiliate the Honorable Elijah Muhammad with the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Mr. Thomas Harvey, along with Howard Brotz, created the supposed link between the UNIA and the NOI in 1964. By that time in 1964, Malcolm X had split from the Nation of Islam and had launched his own negative campaign against his former teacher. Also, divers external forces desired to see the Nation of Islam falter, as had other black nationalist movements before the NOI. Certainly, no evidence has been produced to corroborate Harvey's claim; none of the circumstances surrounding Harvey's claim has coincided with the verifiable facts pertaining to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad; therefore, one must view Harvey's claims with suspicion and in light of the campaign against the Nation of Islam.

On one hand, the statement that the Honorable Marcus Garvey was a forerunner or predecessor of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad is accurate because Garvey was first chronologically. On the other hand, the suggestion that the Nation of Islam evolved from, developed from, branched from or was an offshoot of the Universal Negro Improvement Association is entirely false and gravely illogical, when the facts are considered. Historians, though, bent upon grouping all black nationalist movements in the same category, have ignored the facts. The studies on black nationalism, "Black

Power,” and the Honorable Marcus Garvey, for the most part, have portrayed Garvey accurately, yet the same studies have denied the Honorable Elijah Muhammad equal consideration. Repeatedly, the analyses of the Honorable Marcus Garvey credit him with influencing the Nation of Islam, and the same studies incessantly misinform the public about the Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s organizational affiliations.

In 1976, for example, Tony Martin’s *Race First*, an excellent and definitive work on the legacy of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, committed the mistake of transmitting theory as fact with respect to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. In this case, Martin drew his information from Leonard E. Barrett who, in turn, drew his information from Mrs. Garvey who drew her information from Thomas Harvey. Harvey claimed that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was a corporal in the Chicago division of the UNIA. Perhaps Martin realized the inconsistency and incredibility of Harvey’s claim because Martin conveyed what, seemingly, would have been more logical and cogent, concerning Elijah Muhammad’s ties with the UNIA:

It has been suggested that Elijah Muhammad, leader of the most successful of these Muslim organizations, the Nation of Islam, was a corporal in the uniformed ranks of the Chicago UNIA division. Others remember him as an active member of the Detroit UNIA.<sup>40</sup>

In this quote, Martin attempted to add some historical accuracy to the claim that Elijah Muhammad was a corporal in the UNIA by mentioning that Elijah was a member in Detroit. Although Martin mentioned “others,” which implies more than one, Martin only gave the reader one name in his notes, J. Charles Zampty. Research failed to discover a UNIA membership roster that included the name of J. Charles Zampty, thereby making it impossible to verify if Zampty himself was even a member of the UNIA. Furthermore, Martin did not mention any dates for this information that he received from Zampty, thus

reducing the chance of the information being accurate. If Zampty remembered Elijah as a member of the Detroit chapter, what specifically did he recall about Elijah Muhammad? Martin did not detail his interview with Zampty, but rather, he simply made this one statement. This statement made it possible for future scholars to embellish their theories even more. Martin now had placed the Honorable Elijah Muhammad in Chicago and Detroit; so, according to Martin's book, Muhammad served as a member of the UNIA in two different cities. If all of these claims were true, Muhammad had to be an active member of the UNIA between 1923 and 1931.

By 1978, historians and scholars had published several books on "black separatism" and black nationalism. These books persisted in their efforts to group such movements in the same class, despite their differences and origins. These books also allowed the fallacious theories concerning the relatedness of the NOI and the UNIA to endure. For instance, in 1978, Raymond L. Hall published his book, *Black Separatism In The United States*, in which he rehashed the Moorish Science Temple of America theory, regarding the origins of the Nation of Islam.<sup>41</sup> Hall relied on E.U. Essien-Udom to document his claims, thus rendering them null and void, according to the data presented thus far in this thesis. Then, while discussing the ideology of the Nation of Islam, Hall used Theodore Vincent as his source for the unsubstantiated claim that Muhammad was a former member of the UNIA.<sup>42</sup>

Incidentally, in 1978, Randall K. Burkett published one of his three books on the Honorable Marcus Garvey, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement*, in which he characterized the ideas of the Universal Negro Improvement Association as a civil religion. To bolster his argument, Burkett pointed to the large number of clergymen in

prominent positions and the religious rituals and catechism of the UNIA. Earlier in 1961, though, C. Eric Lincoln had depicted the UNIA as entirely political and social, relegating religion to an inconsequential aspect of the movement.<sup>43</sup> In his book, Burkett made a convincing argument which negated the stance of Lincoln. Unlike other studies on Garvey, Burkett never attempted to associate Master Fard Muhammad, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, or the Nation of Islam to the UNIA, which made his book more veritable than some of the books scrutinized to this point.

In the 1980s, scholars' focus then shifted from "Black Power" and the Honorable Marcus Garvey's influence upon this movement of the sixties and seventies to an assessment of Islam's influence upon black people in the United States. After the Honorable Elijah Muhammad departed on February 25, 1975, his son, Wallace D. Muhammad, inherited the coveted position of leader of the Nation of Islam. Within two years following his ascendancy, though, Wallace Muhammad instituted several changes in the Nation of Islam, thereby dismantling the organization that his father had ruled for over forty years. Indeed, Wallace D. Muhammad's 1980 book, *As The Light Shineth From The East*, attempted to explicate the orthodox direction Wallace had determined to steer the Nation of Islam after his father's death. In this book, Wallace D. Muhammad also reinterpreted the symbolism in Master Fard Muhammad's teachings and reassessed his father's mission.

In 1984, Clifton E. Marsh's *From Black Muslims to Muslims* suggested that the Nation of Islam had undergone a metamorphosis, which accorded the organization recognition as a legitimate Muslim sect. Marsh filled his book with some precise details on the evolution of black nationalism. Marsh's book, however, exhibited a proclivity to

distort the facts purposely and to mislead readers intentionally with respect to the early history of the Nation of Islam. Marsh subscribed to the theory that the Nation of Islam evolved from the “Moorish Science Organization” [sic], and he colluded with Wallace D. Muhammad to supplement his theory.<sup>44</sup>

Additionally, Marsh charted the evolution of the Moorish Science Temple of America and the Nation of Islam. According to Marsh’s chart, both John Givens El and W.D. Fard claimed to be the reincarnation of Noble Drew Ali. The claim by both men caused the MSTA to split in 1930. Marsh’s chart then showed the movement started by Fard (NOI) branching into two factions after Fard’s disappearance—one faction led by Abdul Muhammad and the other led by Elijah Muhammad. In his chart, Marsh incorrectly dated Master Fard Muhammad’s disappearance as occurring in the year 1933.<sup>45</sup> Marsh also included a table of comparison between the Nation of Islam and the Moorish Science Temple of America in which he showed more of the previously mentioned differences between the two organizations than he did similarities.<sup>46</sup> Despite these differences, Marsh spent the entire book repeating the mistakes that dated back to the 1930s. Furthermore, Marsh relied too heavily on newspaper articles which seldom portrayed the Nation of Islam accurately.

Following Marsh’s book, Richard Brent Turner examined the transformation of Islam from the 1920s through the 1960s, focusing on the influence of the Ahmadiyya movement, a brand of Islam practiced in India. Turner’s 1986 dissertation, “Islam In The United States In The 1920s,” argued that the Ahmadiyyas conditioned the minds of urban blacks to accept Islam as their religion by introducing a religion other than Christianity. Brent asserted that a split occurred among Ahmadiyyas which gave rise to the Nation of

Islam.<sup>47</sup> Turner attempted to portray the Ahmadiyyas as having a profound effect on black people in the United States, but he offered no evidence to support his claims. The relevance of Turner's dissertation to this thesis, though, lies in its insight into the Christian views of the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the role of religion in the UNIA. Turner subscribed to Randall Burkett's theory that Garveyism represented a civil religion. Turner used the following quote by the Honorable Marcus Garvey to support his viewpoint:

The idea was to bring to the Negro a scientific understanding of religion. What was desired was one great Christian confraternity without regard to any particular denomination believing ourselves to be religious Christians.<sup>48</sup>

In this quote from Garvey's 1922 speech, "The Future of Religious Faith and Belief of the Negro," at the Third International Convention in 1922, Garvey clearly enunciated his affinity to Christianity as the proper religion of black people. Indeed, both Muslims and Jews had made overtures to Garvey for the Universal Negro Improvement Association to adopt their respective religions as the religion of the organization. In this speech, nevertheless, Garvey shunned both Islam and Judaism by aligning himself with Christianity.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to this insight on the Honorable Marcus Garvey, Turner's dissertation clarified the circumstances surrounding the factionalism among followers of Noble Drew Ali after Ali's death in 1929. Clifton E. Marsh and others stated that Master Fard Muhammad claimed himself to be Noble Drew Ali reincarnated upon Ali's death. In his dissertation, however, Turner rendered the following details pertaining to the events that occurred after Noble Drew Ali's death:

After Drew Ali's death, his attorney, Aaron Payne tried unsuccessfully to unify the Moorish movement. Meanwhile, several of the late prophet's disciples—



Steven Gibbons El (his chauffeur), Ira Johnson Bey (a leader from Pittsburgh, PA), Mealy El, and Kirkman Bey fought each other for the leadership positions. Steven Gibbons [sic] and Ira Johnson claimed that the dead prophet's spirit had entered their bodies. Eventually, a gun battle occurred at Johnson's apartment in which one Moorish American and two policemen died. The Police Department arrested sixty-three Moorish Americans in this incident.<sup>50</sup>

This information provided by Turner diminishes the value of some of the aforementioned historical scholarship because Turner's information attempts to present the facts.

Certainly, Turner broke the mold of earlier scholars with respect to events occurring after Noble Drew Ali's death. Turner did not associate Master Fard Muhammad to the Moorish Science Temple of America, nor did he claim that Master Fard Muhammad believed himself to be Ali reincarnated, as Marsh had posited in 1984. Turner's revelation of the facts proves that some reputable scholars previously misrepresented history.

By the 1990s, three theories concerning the origins of the Nation of Islam had carved niches in written histories under the guise of researched material: the theory that the Nation of Islam evolved from the Moorish Science Temple of America; the theory that the Nation of Islam branched from the Universal Negro Improvement Association; and the theory that Master Fard Muhammad founded the Nation of Islam after defecting from the Black Jews of Harlem. A fourth theory, though less popular and believable, eventually emerged. Although available data contradicted the above-mentioned theories, scholars continued to propagate and devise speculations instead of relating facts. For instance, Malu Halasa's 1990 book, *Elijah Muhammad*, misrepresented the history of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad with this statement:

The notion of black separatist organizations struck a deep chord in Elijah Poole, who joined Garvey's movement shortly after arriving in Detroit and

quickly rose to the position of corporal in the Chicago division of the UNIA. As an ardent Garveyite, he became greatly discouraged by the demise of the movement.<sup>51</sup>

Halasa's book did not provide any documentation; therefore, uninformed readers simply might accept her claim as fact. Halasa claimed that Elijah joined the UNIA in 1923 in Detroit and that Elijah rose to the position of corporal in the Chicago division. As stated earlier, these claims must be considered mere hearsay because the claimants failed to produce one piece of evidence to confirm their allegations. Halasa's statement, in particular, placed the Honorable Elijah Muhammad in Chicago well before 1930, which contradicts facts thus far presented. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad's penury, at that time, also casts a preponderance of doubt on his ability to pay membership dues or to travel between Chicago and Detroit during the years just prior to the stock market crash of 1929. Obviously, Malu Halasa designed this theory based upon previously examined, flawed scholarship.

In fact, if one were to list the books that misinformed the reading public about the origins of the Nation of Islam, the history of Master Fard Muhammad, or the history of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the list would include many more books than those examined in this thesis. At some point, though, perhaps readers will become convinced that scholars and historians have misrepresented, misunderstood, and in some cases, deliberately misinformed the reading public about the Nation of Islam. On October 16, 1995, Minister Louis Farrakhan and others convened a "Million Man March," which centered upon the theme of atonement. Shortly thereafter, scholars and historians rushed to profit from the event and off of the Nation of Islam. Books, such as *Prophet of Rage*, published in 1996 by Arthur J. Magida and *The Black Muslims*, published in 1997 by

William H. Banks, either explained the origins of the Nation of Islam hastily, offered readers an unfavorable view of the Nation of Islam and its past and current leaders, or recapitulated perverted theories.

Other books, such as Mattias Gardell's *In The Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan And The Nation of Islam*, published in 1996, and Claude Andrew Clegg's *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad*, published in 1997, corrected some of the flaws presented by past historians with regard to the Nation of Islam. Gardell's book and Clegg's book proved to be extremely useful and well-documented when compared to the other books examined. These two books, in particular, benefited from the availability of certain government documents (e.g., declassified FBI and CIA files) which were not obtainable for previous scholars.

In fact, the fourth theory concerning the origins of the Nation of Islam developed as a result of the federal government's counter intelligence program designed to subvert the Nation of Islam. This campaign against the Nation of Islam began in earnest in 1963, when the FBI, in concert with the Los Angeles Police Department and the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, published the photo of Wallace Dodd Ford and claimed him to be the founder of the Nation of Islam.<sup>52</sup> Mattias Gardell closely examined this campaign against the Nation of Islam, which created the "Fard-is-a-fraud" theory. Meanwhile, Claude Andrew Clegg III, who claimed that this theory is "somewhat credible," offered readers two photographs of Wallace Dodd Ford; one photo was Ford's San Quentin mug shot, while the other photo was a LAPD photo of him. Evidently, Clegg's imagination blurred his vision because the photos do not resemble the photo of Master Fard Muhammad. Wallace Dodd Ford's face lacked the smoothness and refinement evident in the portrait

of Master Fard Muhammad. Also, Ford's face appeared much more diseased because of abscesses, pustules, and boils on his cheeks.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps, in the interest of institutional "objectivity," Clegg felt compelled to affirm one of the theories propounded by previous scholars. Clegg also incorporated the Moorish Science Temple of America theory in his study, and he restated the previous theories disputed throughout this chapter.<sup>54</sup> Mattias Gardell, on the other hand, declined to accept any of the constructs because he understood that the evidence did not support any of the theories proliferated by scholars and historians under the guise of academic research.

In summary, the majority of this chapter concentrated on the Nation of Islam and its origins because this researcher did not find such flagrant abuses of evidence in the histories written about the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the UNIA. This chapter exposed, point by point, case by case, and decade by decade, the fraudulent theories regarding the origins of the Nation of Islam, the background of Master Fard Muhammad, and the background of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Additionally, this chapter revealed the tendencies of historical scholarship to embellish theories in a progressive fashion.

Moreover, this chapter uncovered how certain individuals made it possible for historians and scholars, after 1970, to mislead and misinform the reading public with respect to the organizational affiliations of Master Fard Muhammad and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Also, this chapter demonstrated what information is unsubstantiated and incongruous with respect to documented facts on the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Finally, this chapter deconstructed the academic studies on the early history of the Nation

of Islam in order to present the Honorable Elijah Muhammad properly and to reconstruct the Nation of Islam's history accurately. The next chapter, however, focuses solely on the background of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, the beginning of the UNIA, and the demise of the UNIA.

---

Notes

## Chapter II

<sup>1</sup> Erdmann D. Beynon, "The Voodoo Cult Among Negro Migrants in Detroit," *American Journal of Sociology* 43.6 (May 1938): 903.

<sup>2</sup> Beynon, "The Voodoo Cult," 903-04.

<sup>3</sup> Beynon, "The Voodoo Cult," 896.

<sup>4</sup> Beynon, "The Voodoo Cult," 903.

<sup>5</sup> Hakim, *The True History of Elijah Muhammad*, 39.

<sup>6</sup> Claude Andrew Clegg III, *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 31.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 30-31.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur H. Fauset, *Moorish Science Temple of America* (New Lisbon: Universal Research Associates, 1994), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Beynon, "The Voodoo Cult," 906.

<sup>10</sup> Fauset, *Moorish Science Temple of America*, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur H. Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro Religious Cults in the Urban North* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944; reprint, 1970), xi.

<sup>12</sup> Fauset, *Moorish Science Temple of America*, 6-8.

<sup>13</sup> Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, *They Seek A City* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945), 175.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 177-78.

<sup>15</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *The True History of Master Fard Muhammad* (Atlanta: M.E.M.P.S. Publication Co., 1996), xv.

<sup>16</sup> Clegg, 345.

<sup>17</sup> Hatim Sahib, "The Nation of Islam" (Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1951), quoted in Elijah Muhammad, *The True History of Master Fard Muhammad*, xvi.

<sup>18</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 12.

<sup>19</sup> Beynon, "The Voodoo Cult," 896.

<sup>20</sup> Lincoln, 170-71.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 181-82.

<sup>22</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman in America* (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1965), 179.

- 
- <sup>23</sup> E.U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, 18-19.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid, 48.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid, 55.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, 56.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid, 87.
- <sup>28</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *History of the Nation of Islam* (Atlanta: Secretarius Mempis Publication, 1993), 44-45.
- <sup>29</sup> Louis E. Lomax, *When The Word Is Given* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1963), 46.
- <sup>30</sup> Hakim, 36.
- <sup>31</sup> Howard Brotz, *The Black Jews of Harlem* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 11-12.
- <sup>32</sup> Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Dover: Majority Press, 1976), 138.
- <sup>33</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *The True History of Master Fard Muhammad*, xxv.
- <sup>34</sup> Theodore G. Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (Berkeley: Rampart Press, 1971), 13-14.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid, 208.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid, 222
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid, 222-23.
- <sup>38</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *The True History of Master Fard Muhammad*, xli-xlvi.
- <sup>39</sup> John Henrik Clarke, ed., *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 372.
- <sup>40</sup> Martin, 76.
- <sup>41</sup> Raymond L. Hall, *Black Separatism In The United States* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1978), 87-90.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid, 97.
- <sup>43</sup> Lincoln, 61.
- <sup>44</sup> Clifton E. Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims: The Transition from Separatism to Islam, 1930-1980* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1984), 31.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid, 30.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid, 32.

---

<sup>47</sup> Richard Brent Turner, "Islam in the United States in the 1920s: The Quest for a New Vision in Afro-American Religion" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1996), 222.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 94-95.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>51</sup> Malu Halasa, *Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1990), 41.

<sup>52</sup> Mattias Gardell, *In The Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 51-55.

<sup>53</sup> Clegg, 110 D.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 19-21, 70-71.



### CHAPTER III

#### MARCUS GARVEY AND THE UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (1914-1927)

Black people should have a religion of their own, a God of their own, a Black God, because when you worship someone else who doesn't look like you, then you are in trouble.

The Honorable Marcus Garvey

On August 17, 1887, Sarah Jane Richards, a domestic servant who cooked and “kept house” for a living in the parish of St. Ann’s Bay, Jamaica, gave birth to her fourth and last child by Malcus Mosiah Garvey Sr., Malcus Mosiah Garvey Jr. Two years and four months later, John Duff married Sarah Jane Richards and Malcus Mosiah Garvey Sr., formalizing what the couple already had consummated with the births of their four children. Prior to his marriage to Sarah Garvey, Malcus Sr. had fathered seven children by two other women, thus making Malcus Jr. the eleventh of eleven children.<sup>1</sup> Marcus Garvey, as Malcus Jr. later renamed himself, recalled his father as being a man of “brilliant intellect and dashing courage.” In 1923, while in the Tombs Prison in New York City, Garvey described his parents in the following way:

My parents were black Negroes. My father . . . was unafraid of consequences. He took human chances in the course of life, as most bold men do, and he failed at the close of his career. He once had a fortune; he died poor. My mother was a sober and conscientious Christian, too soft and good for the time in which she lived. She was the direct opposite of my father. He was severe, firm, determined, bold and strong, refusing to yield even to superior forces if he believed he was right. My mother, on the other hand, was always willing to return a smile for a blow, and ever ready to bestow charity upon her enemy.<sup>2</sup>

In this quote, Garvey stressed the blackness of his parents, which, on the island of Jamaica meant being relegated to the lowest social class. Also, Garvey depicted his parents as righteous people, although their righteous natures manifested themselves in opposite ways. Undoubtedly, Marcus Garvey admired his father's courage because Marcus Garvey's childhood recollections exemplified his propensity, early in his life, to emulate his father's mannerisms. Indeed, Garvey boasted of his youthful vitality, exuberance, and fortitude as though he inherited these characteristics from his father, Marcus Sr. In the parish of St. Ann's Bay, Marcus Garvey grew up in an integrated community. In fact, Garvey lived in his father's property, which was adjacent to the properties of a white man with five children and a white minister with four children. Garvey's parents attended the white minister's church, while Garvey befriended his neighbors' children, becoming close playmates early in their lives.

Garvey's education from private tutors and in the integrated schools afforded him the opportunity to acquire skills, which proved to be crucial to facilitating the dissemination of his ideas in his adult years. By the age of twelve, Garvey had learned the intricacies of the press as a printer's apprentice. Garvey's apprentice master also introduced him to aspects of business, equipping the young Garvey to "manage men." At this early juncture in his life, Marcus Garvey had not been exposed to racism. Garvey matured unconcerned about and ignorant of his designation as a black child. Besides, young Marcus Garvey commanded the respect of his peers, white or black. In his puerility, Marcus Garvey considered himself to be an endearing individual, for his peers looked up to him. During his early adolescent years, Garvey made it a habit to study the deportment of the adults in his social environ, including the teachers who instructed him.<sup>3</sup>

Initially, the white adults in Garvey's social milieu treated him as they treated all the children, whether they were black, "colored," or white. After Garvey reached the age of fourteen, however, he observed that the white parents instructed their children to stay away from him because of his blackness. When the white boys no longer played with Garvey and when the white girls no longer associated with him, Garvey handled the situation in a virile fashion. Since these white boys and girls had looked up to him, Garvey did not care that they no longer wanted to be his friends. After the white boys and girls moved away to attend private boarding schools, though, Garvey found himself alienated from the white people whom he had considered his peers until this point. After being introduced to racism, Garvey deliberately eschewed the white youth in his community. Shortly thereafter, Marcus Garvey's father, Malcus Sr., abandoned the family and moved to the city of Kingston, leaving Marcus, who was fifteen at this point, to be the man of the house. Because Malcus Sr. possessed the means and ability to support his family, Marcus never understood his father's sudden abdication of his responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

So, in 1903, after completing the sixth standard, Marcus Garvey forsook school, and he gained employment with Alfred E. Burrowes and Company as a compositor in Burrowes' printery. Burrowes hired Marcus Garvey because he personally had trained Garvey as an apprentice. Then in 1904, Garvey left St. Ann's Bay to work in the branch printery established by Burrowes in Port Maria, the main town in St. Mary's parish, neighboring St. Ann's Bay. After approximately two years in Port Maria, Marcus Garvey moved to Kingston where he worked in the printing department of P.A. Benjamin Manufacturing Company. While in Kingston, the International Typographical Union of

the American Federation of Labor elected Marcus Garvey as vice-president of the compositors' branch of Kingston Typographical Union. Certainly, as vice-president of the union, Marcus Garvey influenced the printers' strike, which began in 1908 but collapsed in 1909. Garvey's position as vice-president of the local union represented his first stint in a political position.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1910 and 1912, Garvey published a newspaper and pamphlet, participated in the island's elocution contests, and toured Central America. In 1912, Marcus Garvey moved to London where he attended Birkbeck College. Between 1912 and 1914, Garvey attended classes at Birkbeck, toured part of Europe, and published articles in the *African Times and Orient Review*, founded by Duse Mohamed Ali. In June of 1914, Marcus Garvey secured the aid necessary to return to Jamaica, and he arrived in his native country on July 8, 1914.<sup>6</sup>

According to Garvey, his tour of Central America and Europe revealed to him the profundity of black people's misery. Every country that Garvey visited impressed upon him the fact that black people represented the most abject, deprived, and degraded group of people in the world. After touring Central America and Europe, Garvey fully grasped his childhood experiences and the consequences of his blackness. While studying in England, Garvey had learned about the condition of black people in the United States, and he had studied Edward W. Blyden's efforts to colonize black people in the United States on the continent of Africa. Only after reading the autobiography of Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*, however, did Garvey's destiny become clear to him.<sup>7</sup>

When Garvey returned to Jamaica in 1914, he disembarked the S. S. Trent with the ardor to elevate black people from the abyss of despair and decadence. On July 20, 1914,

twelve days after his return to Jamaica, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities (Imperial) League convened their first meeting “with the program of uniting all the negro [sic] peoples of the world into one great body to establish a country and Government absolutely their own.”<sup>8</sup>

Of course, the first members elected Marcus Garvey, who had conceived the name and principles of the organizations, as the President. The distinguishing factor between the UNIA and the ACL centered upon the goals of the two organizations. The UNIA focused more upon the issues of fraternal order and mutual aid, while the ACL sought to mobilize black people around the issue of imperialism, emulating, in terms of ideology, Great Britain’s Imperial Federation League. Eventually, Garvey merged the two organizations, although their roles continued to differ with respect to the general program of the movement. After the merger, the UNIA focused more on membership, while the ACL directed the business of propaganda for the organization.<sup>9</sup>

Through its propaganda, the UNIA conveyed its nationalistic program to the masses of black people. For two years, Marcus Garvey struggled to raise the consciousness of his fellow Jamaicans. Garvey lamented the fact, however, that Jamaicans did not possess the racial consciousness necessary to erect their own independent institutions. Garvey blamed this lack of awareness, among the people of the West Indies, on their acceptance of a three-tiered, color caste system. In his native Jamaica, Garvey observed that the light-skinned Negroes considered themselves to be superior to the dark-skinned Negroes. Garvey intimated that this reasoning among “colored” people precluded the UNIA from fulfilling its potential in Jamaica. In fact, the standard by which people measured themselves throughout the Antilles rested upon European ideals. Accordingly, white

people held the advantage over “colored” people, who maintained the edge over black people. At any rate, Garvey’s firmly entrenched idea that the “African was the standard Negro” impelled “colored” people to criticize his views.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, early in the history of the UNIA, Garvey discovered that the complexity of the race concept hindered the realization of an African Nation. Garvey, though, initially contended that the problem of race did not exist in Jamaica, and since he received most of his early help from Christian, white people, he often lauded white people as being more concerned about black people than some black people were themselves. Moreover, in his propaganda, Garvey depicted the island of Jamaica as a prosperous country that only needed to refine its black inhabitants in order to become a utopian society. Such claims earned Garvey the ire of some prominent Jamaicans who viewed white people as the cause of black people’s oppression on the island. Garvey countered that he wanted to present the public with a positive view of Jamaica, instead of dwelling on the negative conditions under which most black people lived. These differences in viewpoints among Jamaicans made it difficult for the UNIA to thrive in Jamaica.<sup>11</sup>

For this reason, Garvey ventured to the United States in 1916. Prior to his arrival in the United States, Garvey attempted to form an alliance with Booker T. Washington, but Washington’s death in November of 1915 prevented the two men from meeting. Garvey did communicate his ideas, nevertheless, to Washington’s secretary, Emmett J. Scott, before he arrived in the United States.<sup>12</sup> In the United States, Garvey accurately calculated his program to spread among the “racially conscious American Negro.” In contrast to Jamaica, the United States categorized people based upon a two-tiered, color caste system. In the United States, a person identified himself/herself as black or white,

leaving no discretion for any classification in between these two groups. So, in March of 1916, when Marcus Garvey arrived in New York City, he entered an environment that he anticipated was conducive to the success of his movement. Garvey intended to unite all black people under the slogan “One God, One Aim, and One Destiny.”<sup>13</sup>

After his first public lecture on May 9, 1916, Garvey toured the United States, discussing the agenda of the UNIA and exposing the impoverished condition of his fellow Jamaicans. Then, in May of 1917, after he had spoken in thirty-eight states, Garvey returned to New York City and organized the first branch of the UNIA in the United States. Originally, thirteen members formed the nucleus of this first branch, although the news of the organization spread rapidly. In July of the same year, rioting erupted in East St. Louis, Illinois, and Garvey seized the opportunity to attack the U. S. brand of racism. Thereafter, Garvey determined to remain in the United States because the American Negroes, who experienced the most rabid form of racism, gravitated to his ideas more readily than his Jamaican countrymen did.<sup>14</sup>

Garvey had not witnessed any lynching in his native land of Jamaica. Garvey did not grow up legally segregated from white people. Garvey had never seen mobs of fanatic bigots taking the law into their own hands; therefore, he sympathized with the American Negro who held no protection under law from white racists. Unfortunately, the Honorable Marcus Garvey ignored the political underpinnings which influenced the race issue within the United States. Garvey presumed that the American Negroes’ racial consciousness urged them to accept a program founded upon the idea of an independent and sovereign nation. Furthermore, Garvey misjudged the commitment of the American Negroes’ leadership to black nationalism. By the time Garvey reached the United States,

the black intelligentsia and bourgeoisie had managed to appropriate the leadership mantle from the industrialists of the South, who themselves had encouraged accommodation.

During this time period, some black intellectuals also began to subscribe to communist and socialist ideas, thereby creating a dichotomous front against the industrialist, capitalist program espoused by the Honorable Marcus Garvey. Garvey's program combined the nationalist sentiment of the late nineteenth century with the industrialist ideas of Booker T. Washington; therefore, his vision of black nationalism predicated itself on economic independence. All other ideas merely supported Garvey's economic agenda. Some contemporary studies may argue that Garveyism represented a civil religion, but the facts belie this assertion.

Of course, Garvey evolved and adjusted his ideology to suit specific social atmospheres, but one cannot ignore Garvey's emphasis on building an economic empire with Africa as its center. Garvey used various mottoes and slogans to capture the attention and imagination of black people. Most of Garvey's adherents in the United States, though, never had learned the science of rhetoric; therefore, they failed to understand the psychology involved in Garvey's sublime phraseology. What the masses of black people recognized in the Honorable Marcus Garvey, however, was that this man produced results. Black women observed as a black millinery shop opened. Black men saw more black stores opening under the auspices of the UNIA. Black people watched as the UNIA opened laundries in black neighborhoods, making it possible for black dollars to circulate within the community. These facts, coupled with the fact that these businesses created jobs, attracted the masses of black people, who did not mind contributing their pennies, nickels, and dimes to realize a black nation.



The industrial and capitalist success of the UNIA, nevertheless, shocked and disappointed some black intellectuals, who desired to integrate or to experiment with socialism. Garvey's ideas for governance of a black nation offended some of his detractors. When the Honorable Marcus Garvey first formed the UNIA, the organization endorsed the following objectives:

To establish a Universal Confraternity among the race. To promote the spirit of race pride and love. To reclaim the fallen of the race. To administer to and assist the needy. To assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa. To Strengthen the Imperialism of Basutoland, Liberia, etc. To establish Commissioners in the Principal Countries of the World, for the Protection of all Negroes, Irrespective of Nationality. To Promote a Conscientious Christian Worship among the Native Tribes of Africa. To Establish Universities, Colleges and Secondary Schools for the Further Education and Culture of our Boys and Girls.<sup>15</sup>

By July of 1918, however, Garvey had expanded the objectives to include a Constitution and Book of Laws governing the UNIA and ACL. Garvey first organized the UNIA in May of 1917, and by October of the same year the group had expanded from thirteen to approximately six hundred members.

Garvey discovered, though, that many of these new members wanted to involve the organization in politics, whereas Garvey remained apolitical at that time. Due to the machinations of "politicians," the organization splintered into separate factions. This first split occurred in October, but Garvey still had not purged the original organization of its political elements; therefore, another split happened in January of 1918.

Consequently, the Honorable Marcus Garvey reorganized the New York branch in February of 1918. In order to protect the organization from political parasites, Garvey wisely incorporated both the UNIA and ACL in June and July of 1918, respectively.<sup>16</sup>

After incorporating the organization, Garvey published the aforementioned “Constitution and Book of Laws,” which outlined the rules, regulations, and procedures for all UNIA divisions and branches. From the UNIA’s constitution, one is able to glean what type of government Garvey proposed for the black nation. This researcher believes that Garvey envisioned a democratic monarchy, meaning that the members maintained representation through electoral rights, but the rights confined them to electing a sovereign ruler. This form of government functioned effectively for the masses of black people who felt alienated from mainstream America, but for the intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, this system deprived them of their status in mainstream America.

By the end of 1918, Garvey had managed to offend some socialists and integrationists with his “pompous” attitude to such an extent that they resorted to criticizing him and his plans—to the detriment of the masses of black people. Increasingly, Garvey’s critics launched multifarious campaigns to decimate his organization and foil his business schemes. Eventually, these same cynics of Garvey solicited the help of the federal government to disrupt Garvey’s influence on the masses of black people.

In fact, portents of the UNIA’s demise appeared as early as 1918. Garvey habitually castigated and verbally lambasted the American Negroes’ appointed leadership to the point that they had to respond to his attacks. The Honorable Marcus Garvey, a master rhetorician, must have realized that his enemies would resort to personal attacks on his character. After all, one of the diversionary tactics of rhetoric, for the weaker rhetorician, is to impute the character of the superior rhetorician, especially, when his/her arguments prove to be impenetrable and logically cohesive. Accordingly, Garvey’s opponents

mounted a crusade against him, which eventually landed him in jail and later in prison. By 1918, Garvey had created enough enemies among American Negroes that attacks on his character began to surface frequently, as evidenced by these questions addressed to Garvey and printed in the *New Negro* in January of the same year:

(1) Are you a citizen of New York or of the U.S.? (2) Have you any visible means of support? (3) Is your present organization a branch of the Jamaica Industrial School scheme which you launched on your first arrival in America? (4) How much money did you collect from all sources for this work? How much did you collect in Jamaica? (5) What did you do with it? (6) Have you at any time made a report in writing of all monies received by you for the various schemes you have set on foot here, if not, why not? . . . (9) What Africans of light and leading in Africa are co-operating with you to establish a great Negro commercial center? (10) How is your organization going to bring this about? (11) What authority have you to represent the Africans? (12) Have any of the native kings or chiefs authorized you to speak for them or their peoples? . . . (14) Are you aware that you are playing with fire and may get your fingers burned? And that if you were a citizen of this country instead of an unknown wandering alien with a grudge against toil, your brilliant philippics and criticisms of native Americans of African descent might be more effective, if you were more responsible than you now seem to be? (15) Who are you anyhow and what is your game?<sup>17</sup>

From this excerpt written by John E. Bruce, one is able to detect several tactics used by Garvey's enemies to precipitate his decline. First, Bruce isolated Garvey from the "American Negroes;" second, Bruce questioned Garvey about his means of support. Third, Bruce reminded Garvey of his reason for coming to the United States; fourth, Bruce questioned Garvey's management of the masses of black people's finances. Fifth, Bruce challenged Garvey's authority to represent Africans throughout the diaspora. Finally, Bruce questioned Garvey's competence and integrity. Although some of the questions were legitimate questions, the tone of the questions intimated Bruce's jealousy at the success that Garvey experienced in the United States. Garvey encountered several obstacles in his attempt to build a black nation, but challenges such as the ones posed by

John E. Bruce, who was a member of a faction that split from the original UNIA, proved to be the catalysts for the eventual collapse of the UNIA.<sup>18</sup> Obviously men, like Bruce, viewed Garvey and his UNIA as threats to the established order in the United States, and they felt no loyalty to a black nation over which the Honorable Marcus Garvey presided.

Among civic leaders, nevertheless, the Honorable Marcus Garvey received his greatest support from clergymen who shepherded the churches that many Garveyites attended. Certainly, Garvey's devotion to Christianity as the proper religion for American Negroes allayed the fears of most black Christians and some white Christians. As a reminder, Garvey's parents raised him in a Christian environment. Moreover, since Garvey spent his formative years in an integrated community under the aegis of the Church of England's missionaries, his affinity to Christianity stemmed from this background.

Furthermore, white ministers had given Garvey much philanthropic support during the organizational stage of the UNIA in Jamaica; so, this succor from white people strengthened Garvey's faith in the Christian ethic. Likewise, since Garvey had never witnessed white Christians blaspheming or deviating from their religion by lynching black people in Jamaica, Garvey found no fault in the principles of Christianity; therefore, Garvey had no reason to disavow this religion. More importantly, most American Negroes practiced Christianity, and Garvey used this fact to his advantage.

Truthfully, the UNIA practiced religious tolerance, although its catechism and rituals proved that the organization adhered to a Christian understanding of God. Even Garvey's personal ideas concerning God reflected an eclectic understanding of religion. While studying at Birkbeck College in London, Garvey delved into the history of

religions and nations. Garvey's years as an understudy to Duse Mohamed Ali in London, deepened Garvey's knowledge of Islam. The influence of Rabbi Arnold J. Ford and other "Black Jews" in Harlem of the New York branch of the UNIA urged Garvey to examine Judaism, and his own upbringing as a Christian added to his views of religion. As mentioned in Chapter Two, both Muslims and Jews attempted to lure Garvey from his Christian stance, but Garvey never yielded to these temptations. Research suggests that Garvey identified with the European, Christian nations; accordingly, Garvey did not want to distance the UNIA from white philanthropy, nor did he want to disturb American Negroes' contentment with Christian dogma.<sup>19</sup>

Instead, Garvey desired to transform American Negroes' inferiority complexes, and he wanted to reform their images of God. In the book, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement*, Randall K. Burkett characterized Garvey's theology as essentially Arianism.<sup>20</sup> According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, the following defines Arianism:

A theological movement initiated by Arius in oppositon to Sabellianism that won strong support during the 4<sup>th</sup> century A. D. chiefly in the Eastern churches but that was condemned in general councils at Nicea (325 A. D.) and Constantinople (381 A. D.), the doctrine being marked by the following principles: (1) God is absolutely unknowable, and separate from every created being; (2) the Christ, the Logos or Son of God, pre-existent but not eternally real, is a created being and so not God in the fullest sense, though as maker of all other creatures he may be regarded and worshiped as a secondary divinity; (3) in the incarnation the Logos assumed a body but not a human soul, and so Jesus Christ was neither truly God nor truly man.<sup>21</sup>

Since Garvey differentiated God's nature from the nature of man on a number of occasions, Burkett's assessment of Garvey's theology as being Arian appears accurate. Garvey stressed that God's infinitude and man's finitude distinguished them from one another. Garvey also indicated that he considered the Biblical Jesus Christ as a being

worthy of worship because he represented the incarnation of God through the Virgin Mary. According to Garvey, in the universal hierarchy, Jesus Christ held the highest rank next to God, the creator. Jesus ranked higher than angels, the prophets, and humans because, according to doctrine, God begot him through the Virgin Mary. Finally, Garvey subscribed to the notion of a Godhead comprising the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.<sup>22</sup> In this theological foundation Garvey contradicted himself, yet he remained staunch in his support of Christianity.

In fact, Garvey used his understanding of Christianity to support his ideas concerning racial purity. Garvey maintained that God never intended for different races to contaminate their purity through miscegenation. Garvey argued that races rebelled against God when they intermarried and diluted their blood through such amalgamation. To support his argument, Garvey pointed to nature where species preserved themselves by mating only among their own kind. According to this logic, then, Garvey considered each race to be a different species, although God created them all. Garvey underscored his belief that, originally, each race possessed a land or territory separate from other races because God never intended for the races to integrate and unify as one. Garvey attributed the demise of God's original order to the deviation of white people from the Almighty's will.<sup>23</sup>

This philosophy created more enemies for the Honorable Marcus Garvey, especially, among integrationists. In the United States, this group of people, led by the NAACP and W. E. B. DuBois, proved to be Garvey's severest critics, and research confirms that they conspired with the federal government to initiate deportation proceedings against the Honorable Marcus Garvey. Indeed, many forces contributed to

Garvey's decline in the United States, including Garvey's own naivete, but no groups ostracized Garvey as much as integrationists did. As indicated earlier, Garvey's problems first began when the New York branch split for the second time in January of 1918. John E. Bruce and others who wanted to dominate the New York UNIA questioned the integrity and competence of Garvey shortly after the split. In June of 1918, the American Protective League informed the Bureau of Investigations of Garvey's street-corner harangues and agitation among the Negroes of Harlem, and the league suggested to the Bureau of Investigation that they should probe the activities of Garvey and the UNIA.<sup>24</sup>

When Garvey incorporated the UNIA and ACL in July of 1918, he ensured that the majority of the organization remained devoted to him, and the legal incorporation virtually eliminated the competition from the splinter group over which Samuel A. Duncan presided. In September of 1918, the Bureau of Investigations heeded the advice of the American Protective League, sending a Negro informant to the street meetings in Harlem. By November of 1918, Garvey's movement had grown enough that the Bureau of Investigations considered it a menace and "took up questions of disposing of Garvey." At that point, the U. S. Postal Censorship Committee intercepted Garvey's mail headed for the British Honduras, attempting to prevent Garvey's rise to international prominence. By then, Garvey not only had offered advice to the Allied powers in Europe, but also, he had connected the Negroes in the United States to Negroes in Central America and throughout the Antilles.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly, by the end of 1918, the government of the United States considered the Honorable Marcus Garvey a threat to civil order; therefore, the Military Intelligence

Division (MID) launched its own campaign to discredit Garvey locally, nationally, and internationally. To these ends, the MID employed Emmett J. Scott, former secretary of Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee Institute, to investigate Garvey and the UNIA. The MID also informed the British government of the activities of Garvey and the spread of his propaganda throughout the British colonies.

Subsequently, the Bureau of Investigation increased its inquiries into the activities of Garvey and the UNIA, again abetted by Negro informants. Garvey also increased the number of his opponents in 1919, after his official denunciation of W. E. B. DuBois, one of the founders of the NAACP, in the *Negro World*. In Garvey's address, he depicted DuBois as a Negro working for white men to the detriment of his own people. While in France in 1919, DuBois had repudiated the UNIA's claims that civil rights violations were occurring in America at that time. DuBois criticized and argued against the grievances presented by Eliezer Cadet in the French press on behalf of the UNIA.<sup>26</sup> Hence, a feud began between Garvey and DuBois that did not end until Garvey's death in 1940.

In the meantime, the Bureau of Investigation continued to accumulate incriminating data on Garvey and to plant Negro informants throughout the UNIA. So, when the Honorable Marcus Garvey announced his plans to found the Black Star Line on April 27, 1919, he had an abundance of internal and external forces operating against his plans, including the following: the New York District Attorney's office, Negro informants, pawns, and detractors, the Bureau of Investigation, the Military Intelligence Division, and the governments of several foreign countries led by Great Britain. Publicly, District Attorney Edwin P. Kilroe posed the biggest threat to Garvey's plans for the Black Star



Line. With the assistance of Negro infiltrators, Kilroe managed to harass Garvey, although he failed to impede the collection of monies necessary to launch the Black Star Line. Eventually, Kilroe charged Garvey with criminal libel because of statements printed in the UNIA's newspaper, *Negro World*.<sup>27</sup>

Simultaneously, the British colonial secretary introduced legislation in the British colonies of Central America and the Antilles to suppress distribution of the *Negro World*. Authorities in countries, such as Belize (British Honduras), British Guiana, and Trinidad, confiscated and seized all copies of the *Negro World*. Later, the British authorities attributed the July uprisings in Belize to the suppression of Garvey's propaganda. Concurrently, devastating riots occurred in cities of Washington, D.C. and Chicago, which the United States authorities likely attributed to the incendiary propaganda and nationalist program of the Honorable Marcus Garvey.<sup>28</sup>

By August of 1919, Garvey's popularity had increased to the point that the Attorney General's office considered him a threat to the national security of the United States. So, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, Jay Edgar Hoover, initiated the investigation that eventually led to Garvey's deportation. Divisions of the Bureau of Investigation in New York and Chicago closely monitored all activities of Garvey and the UNIA, collecting evidence to charge Garvey with fraudulent business dealings. In a letter to the Secretary of Labor, the Assistant Attorney General, Robert Stewart, enclosed an anonymous letter which enumerated the following charges against Garvey:

He is vulnerable along the following lines: (1) He has manipulated the funds of the Black Star Line to liquidate debts of two other corporations of which he is also president. (2) His accounts have never been audited and will disclose gross mismanagement and dishonesty. (3) He uses the mails to circulate the newspaper which has an advertisement of the Black Star Line which is obviously a fraud. (4) Co-operation with the British colonial office & secret

service will easily break his propaganda in British territory. (5) He is liable to the Mann white Slave Act since he has traveled out of New York with his secretary and on his return has slept at her house regularly. (6) He is wanted in Jamaica his native country on a criminal charge besides having been arrested in Costa Rica from which country he is an alleged fugitive of Justice.<sup>29</sup>

The Negro informant who provided this information to the U. S. government considered himself to be doing his duty as an American citizen. The statement also reflects to what extent the U. S. government went to indict the Honorable Marcus Garvey. The fifth point of this correspondence referred to a law which made it illegal for a man to transport a woman across state lines for prostitution or immoral practices. Accordingly, the informant accused Garvey of prostituting Amy Ashwood, who was Garvey's secretary at that time.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the myriad forces mounting against him, Garvey persisted in efforts to build a black nation centered upon economic enterprises. At that time, the UNIA only owned a few stores and a restaurant, but under the leadership of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, the organization sought to purchase its first steamship. Garvey first announced the scheme in April of 1919; then, in June he solicited funds from American Negroes to realize the purchase of the Black Star Line's first ship, predicting an October 31<sup>st</sup> "float date," if the two million dollars were raised in four months. By October 31, 1919, Garvey delivered what he had promised the masses of black people, when the Black Star Line held a reception for its stockholders aboard the S. S. Yarmouth. Shortly thereafter, Garvey announced plans to purchase a second steamship. In fact, the Black Star Line, incorporated in the state of Delaware, managed to purchase a total of three steamships, the S. S. Yarmouth, the S. S. Shadyside, and the S. S. Kanawha before the summer of 1920.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps, spurred by the relative ease with which he secured funds from the masses of black people, Garvey announced plans for a millinery factory under the auspices of the Negro Factory Corporation incorporated in the state of New York. Between the years, 1919 and 1920, the UNIA experienced an enormous growth in membership and finances, which made the U. S. government's job of derailing Garvey's black nationalist movement much easier. Also, during that period, Garvey's legal woes hinted to a conspiracy against the UNIA and himself. Garvey spared none of his enemies and critics from bitter denunciations, including New York's District Attorney. His attack on Attorney Kilroe caused him to be incarcerated in the Tombs Prison in New York in 1919. In September of 1919, authorities arrested him in Chicago for selling stocks without a license, for which he paid a fine. Garvey refused to allow his enemies' ploys, however, to hinder his vision of a black nation in Africa, but rather, he continued to expand his movement.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile, Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis, Antigua, Dominica, and St. Lucia, joined the list of countries which banned the *Negro World* from their citizens. Indeed, because of the bans on the *Negro World* throughout the British colonial empire, Garvey centralized his base of power in the United States, where his most bitter rivals also maintained a base of power. Moreover, the formation of the Universal African Legions, the military branch of the UNIA, during this period raised the concern of the U. S. government, but Jay Edgar Hoover still had not amassed enough evidence to indict Garvey. Through its Negro informants, the Bureau of Investigations learned that Garvey wanted to secure enough money to pay off Liberia's debt to the United States, then reestablish the UNIA headquarters in Monrovia. Monrovia, Liberia then would become the central base of operations and training grounds for the Universal African Legions.<sup>33</sup>

In August 1920, at the UNIA's First Annual International Convention in New York, Garvey showcased the UNIA and its auxiliary branches for the world to see. During this month long extravaganza, the UNIA voted the Honorable Marcus Garvey as provisional president of Africa, elected its high officers, adopted its own Declaration of Rights, and launched the Liberian Construction Loan and colonization plan. During the month of the convention, Garvey also apologized for comments directed towards New York District Attorney, Edwin Kilroe, and others temporarily easing his legal burdens. After the convention, Garvey toured the Caribbean and Central America to strengthen the branches of the UNIA in these areas and to solicit more funds. Upon completion of his tour, the State Department instructed the American consul to deny Garvey a visa to reenter the United States.<sup>34</sup> This move gave the U. S. government time to further infiltrate the various branches of the UNIA within the United States and spread dissension among the members.

Therefore, when the American consul reversed its decision in July of 1921, allowing Garvey to reenter the United States, Garvey returned to a UNIA weakened by financial mismanagement, questionable business dealings, and political subversion. Garvey attempted to correct the problems upon his return by dismissing some officials and members, but while on leave in Central America and the Antilles, his control of the New York division of the UNIA diminished. Interestingly enough, the American consul had granted Garvey his visa in time for the UNIA's Second International Convention in New York. The second convention demonstrated the perseverance of Garvey and the UNIA, and this convention exhibited the usual atmosphere of pomp and ceremony which

characterized UNIA events. Hidden beneath the veneer of black unity and nationalism, however, lay several legal obstacles for the Honorable Marcus Garvey to negotiate.

On January 12, 1922, federal authorities arrested the Honorable Marcus Garvey in New York on charges of mail fraud. On February 15, a federal grand jury indicted Garvey but he was released on bail. While on bail, Garvey commenced a speaking tour to raise funds for the UNIA, divorced his first wife, Amy Ashwood Garvey, married his second wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, and met with the Acting Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, Edward Young Clarke. All of the above-mentioned events occurred within the span of seven months. In August, the UNIA held its Third International Convention in New York amid Garvey's indictment for mail fraud and amid discord among UNIA members. Also, the many enemies whom Garvey had made among the intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, including but not limited to W. E. B. DuBois, Chandler Owen, Samuel Duncan, and Robert Bagnall, intensified their efforts to have Garvey deported from the United States. Such Negro opponents, along with the mass of evidence suggesting administrative negligence on the part of Garvey, led to the UNIA's demise.<sup>35</sup>

On May 18, 1923, Garvey's trial for mail fraud began, and due to Garvey's lack of confidence in any of the available attorneys, he defended himself. Garvey defended himself truthfully and valiantly, but on June 21, 1923, Judge Julian Mack of New York's District Court, who also was a member of the NAACP, sentenced the Honorable Marcus Garvey to five years in prison for mail fraud. Garvey served three months in the Tombs Prison in New York before being released on bail to await the hearing of his appeal. In the interim between Garvey's release on bail and the decision on his appeal hearing, Amy Jacques Garvey published *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, the UNIA

founded the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company, which was another steamship company, and the UNIA held its Fourth International Convention in New York in 1924. In that same year, the UNIA endorsed Calvin Coolidge for president of the United States. On February 3, 1925, however, the U. S. Court of Appeals upheld the district court's conviction of Garvey on mail fraud charges. Five days later federal authorities placed the Honorable Marcus Garvey in the custody of the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary to serve the sentence for mail fraud.<sup>36</sup>

While incarcerated, Garvey continued to influence the policy and program of the UNIA, but he delegated the primary responsibilities of the UNIA's affairs to his wife, Amy Jacques Garvey. Garvey also corresponded with various, white organizations while imprisoned in Atlanta, and he applied for a pardon, which was denied as "premature" in 1925. During his first year of incarceration, Garvey wrote "African Fundamentalism," a collection of some of his speeches and an expose on his personal studies and ideas. In 1926, the UNIA held a special convention in Detroit to elect its officers. The convention's delegates elected loyal Garveyites to fill the officers' positions, but factionalism occurred, thus causing the UNIA to splinter again.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, on November 18, 1927, President Coolidge commuted Garvey's sentence. Three days after the "immediate" order by Coolidge, authorities transported Garvey to New Orleans where he addressed a throng of supporters who had gathered to bid him farewell. When the S. S. Saramacca sailed from New Orleans with the Honorable Marcus Garvey aboard it, American Negroes lost a leader who had shown them how to determine their own collective destiny.<sup>38</sup> During Garvey's approximate, ten years in North America, he managed to accomplish what black intelligentsia and bourgeoisie

failed to effect through their studies. Among black people, Garvey promoted the necessity of self-reliance via economic enterprise.

Under the leadership of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, the UNIA opened restaurants, grocery stores, laundries, a factory, and two commercial shipping companies, which purchased a total of four vessels. These business endeavors created jobs for black people and circulated black dollars within black communities. Undoubtedly, historical evidence proves that the collusion between the U. S. government and its European allies, in concert with Negro integrationists and pawns, caused the UNIA to flounder economically. Once these conspirators managed to eradicate the economic base of the UNIA, the movement lost its primary appeal and its power to sway the masses of black people. Indeed, Garvey's confidence and trust in the moral probity of his administrators and officers recoiled to harm the UNIA and the masses of black people. The Honorable Marcus Garvey, however, did set an economic example of black nationalism at a time when black people relied upon white people for their subsistence.

---

Notes

## Chapter III

<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey And Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 1:16, n., 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 20, n., 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, cx-cxii.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, lx-xi.

<sup>10</sup> Robert A. Hill and Barbara Bair, eds., *Marcus Garvey Life And Lessons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 202.

<sup>11</sup> Hill, 1:45-50.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 212-20.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, lix.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 246-80.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 234-35.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 559.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, lxviii-xx.

<sup>20</sup> Randall K. Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement: The Institutionalization of a Black Civil Religion* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1978), xxii.

<sup>21</sup> *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1993), s.v. "Arianism."

<sup>22</sup> Hill and Bair, 221-32.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 203-04.

<sup>24</sup> Hill, 1:244.



---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 293-302.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 392-400.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 475-80.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, cxiv-xv.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 484.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 484-85.

<sup>31</sup> Hill, 2:lii-iii.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, l-i.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 201-03.

<sup>34</sup> Hill and Bair, lxiv-xv.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 80-82, 91-92.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, lxx-vi.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, lxx-vi, 90.

## CHAPTER IV

### ELIJAH MUHAMMAD AND THE NATION OF ISLAM (1930-1947)

The Christians refer to God as a “Mystery” and a “Spirit” and divide Him into thirds. One part they call the Father, another part the Son, and the third part they call the Holy Ghost—which makes the three, one. This is contrary to both nature and mathematics. The law of mathematics will not allow us to put three into one . . . We wonder how can the son be human, and the father a mystery (unknown), or a spirit? Who is this Holy Ghost that is classified as being the equal of the father and the son?

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad

Sometime during the second week of October 1897, in the small town of Sandersville, Georgia, Marie Poole gave birth to her sixth child by William Poole Sr., Elijah Poole. Later, Elijah Muhammad chose October 7 as the date of his birth, but when he was born, his parents, like many others in the rural South, did not keep records or track of every day, so Elijah never knew the actual date of his birth. At that time in Sandersville, William Sr. divided his time between sharecropping for a local farmer and preaching as a Baptist minister. Also, to augment the income of her husband, Marie Poole worked as a domestic in the houses of local white families.<sup>1</sup>

By that time, reconstruction had ended, forcing some black people into living conditions which were worse than they had been before slavery. For the next few years, Marie’s domestic work and William Sr.’s sharecropping and preaching earned the Pooles enough money to provide their family with the bare necessities of life. During many of the church services, William Sr. allowed Elijah, who then was four years old, to sit in the pulpit while he delivered his sermons.<sup>2</sup>

In 1903, the family moved from Sandersville to Cordele, a smaller town in South Central Georgia. Before the move, William Sr. fathered a son by another woman in Sandersville, making Elijah one of his father's seven children at the time the family departed for Cordele in 1903.<sup>3</sup> In Cordele, William Sr. resumed his customary roles of preacher and sharecropper, while Marie attended to the family and contributed financially as a domestic. After the family moved, Elijah reached the age for attending school; therefore, he entered the black public school system of Cordele, Georgia. Young Elijah trudged five miles daily to learn the rudiments of reading and writing, until he finished the fourth grade. After Elijah completed the fourth grade, perforce he quit school and began working to supplement the family income, despite being advanced to the fifth standard.<sup>4</sup> By that time in 1907, Marie Poole had given birth to three more children, making Elijah one of her nine children.

For his first job, Elijah cut firewood and carried the wood into town to sell to the local townspeople. Prior to this job, Elijah had remained segregated from white people, so his only knowledge of them came from his grandparents who had narrated slavery stories to him as a youngster. When Elijah began going to town, though, his lessons concerning white people commenced, for the white folks jeered at him and his siblings with the customary racial slurs and epithets used to demean black people. On one particular day, while returning from town, Elijah strayed from the trail that his father taught him always to follow. As he strolled through the woods on his way home, Elijah heard the sounds of people as if they were gathering for a special event. Elijah crept through the bushes to get a glimpse of the people whom he heard, and when he ventured close enough to peep through an opening in the brush, he saw a small crowd of white

people. Elijah also saw one of the older, black youths from his neighborhood being beaten, kicked, prodded, shot, and spat upon by the white people. Young Elijah watched as white men placed a rope around the black youth's neck and hoisted the youth's mangled body up a tree with the rope.<sup>5</sup>

Overcome by the fear of what his eyes had witnessed, Elijah raced home never to forget the horrific crime perpetrated against this black youth in 1907. Elijah continued to grow, nevertheless, as did the number of offspring from the union of Marie and William Poole Sr., which numbered thirteen by the time Elijah moved about forty miles North of Cordele to Macon, Georgia. Elijah left Cordele at the age of sixteen to find better employment, but he traveled back and forth between Macon and Cordele in order to support his family. In 1915, Elijah met Clara Evans in Cordele, Georgia, undoubtedly adding to his motivation to make the constant trips between Macon and Cordele. On May 2, 1917, Elijah and Clara ended their two years of courtship and married in Cordele, Georgia.<sup>6</sup>

Afterwards, the couple moved to Macon, where Elijah worked a variety of jobs, including a laborer in a sawmill and a sharecropper. Eventually, tiring of the treatment of workers and conditions in agricultural work, Elijah sought employment in other areas. Soon, Elijah managed to secure a job as a tramroad foreman and builder for the Cherokee Brick Company.<sup>7</sup> The outbreak of World War I stimulated the economy and increased Elijah's opportunities for employment. After the war ended in 1919, Elijah Poole gained employment with the Southern Railroad Company as a gang laborer laying tracks. Elijah continued to work for the Southern Railroad Company, as his own family began to increase in size. Clara gave birth to their first son, Emmanuel, in February of 1921; then

in October of 1922, Clara gave birth to their first daughter, Ethel. Simultaneously, Elijah's labor began to take its toll on him, but since he had a family to support, he endured the low wages and harsh treatment accorded black people in rural Georgia at that time.

In 1923, after being insulted and harassed one too many times by the white supervisor of the company, Elijah Poole decided that, in order to preserve his dignity and manhood, he had to quit the job at the Southern Railroad Company. Elijah had tolerated the mental and verbal abuse for a period of four years, while working for the railroad. In fact, from his youth to that point, Elijah had witnessed lynchings, had been subjected to ridicule and personal mistreatment, and had observed the overall diabolical and inhumane physical abuse meted out to black people by white people in rural Georgia. Personally, Elijah saw no hope in trying to resist the cruelty because black people, in his mind, had become inured to and accepted this treatment. Even as a child, Elijah never comprehended how black men allowed white men to treat them in the manner that they did.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps to avoid having his children to become victims of white brutality, Elijah decided to leave the state of Georgia in April of 1923 with his wife and their two children. Elijah's parents and his siblings who had not emigrated from the South joined Elijah and his family, embarking on a trek to the city of Detroit, Michigan, where they heard that more opportunities awaited them. After arriving in Michigan, Elijah and his family settled at 8474 Manhattan in a little municipality within Detroit called Hamtramck.<sup>9</sup> The Pooles quickly discovered that competition for the paucity of jobs was stiff, considering the large number of immigrants of various ethnic groups. William

Poole Sr. even found that the city teemed with preachers, thus making it impossible for him to secure his own pastorate. William Sr. eventually landed a job with the city's public works department, while Elijah obtained employment with the American Nut Company, which lasted very briefly. Shortly thereafter, Elijah found a job with the American Wire and Brass Company, which paid him the most money he had ever earned in his life—sixty cents an hour. This job proved indispensable to the subsistence of Elijah and his family from 1923 through 1925, especially, since Clara gave birth to their third child, Lottie, in January of 1925.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, the job with the American Wire and Brass Company lasted only about two years, forcing Elijah again to seek employment to provide for his family. Between 1925 and 1930, Elijah never maintained steady employment, instead he ventured through a variety of jobs to ensure that his family possessed the bare essentials for existence. After 1925, Elijah briefly worked for the Detroit Copper Company, and he also worked six months for the Briggs Body and Chevrolet Axle Company. In June of 1926, Clara gave birth to their fourth child, Nathaniel, while Elijah struggled to support his family. Undoubtedly, during the periods of unemployment he received some help from his father, and later, Clara added to the family's income as a domestic. Eventually, though, the scarcity of jobs forced Elijah Poole and his family to apply for public assistance, thereby joining the scores of urban migrants—both black and white—who depended upon the government for subsistence during the years prior to the Depression of 1929.<sup>11</sup>

During these times of tribulation, Elijah often attempted to escape reality by over-indulging in alcohol. In fact, several times his wife, Clara, had to carry an inebriated

Elijah Poole from the gutters and off the streets in order to restore him to some semblance of decency. By the time the stock market crashed in October of 1929, Elijah Poole had sunk to the depths of despair and disenchantment. Clara had given birth to their fifth child, Herbert, although Elijah had no employment to provide for his family. To make matters worse, the amount of government relief decreased because of the increasing number of recipients. During the periods of unemployment, Elijah spent some of his time discussing religion with his brothers and his father, which relieved his conscience of the impoverished condition of his family. Later in his life, Elijah recalled how he always had wanted to become a preacher, but he was not able to reconcile some of the problems Christianity posed for him.<sup>12</sup>

Time passed, nonetheless, and Elijah continued to contemplate his life's vicissitudes, unaware that his fortune was about to change permanently in the very near future. On July 4, 1930, while the country celebrated its one hundred and fifty-fourth anniversary, a stranger appeared in the city of Detroit. This man began peddling silks and other wares door-to-door, which the indigent black people of urban Detroit had not seen. This man knew that the majority of the people were not able to afford the goods that he offered, thus his intentions were not merely to sell his merchandise. Instead, this man sought to draw the people's attention to the silks just long enough to begin a conversation with them.<sup>13</sup>

At that time in 1930, this man introduced himself as Wallace Fard, and he stated that he and the silks which he carried came from the Holy City of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. This man who also used the initials W. D. in front of Fard, once inside the homes of his curious guests, began teaching them simple facts which they never had considered or

even known. For example, he told more than one person that the sun did not move, but in fact, the earth upon which they were standing rotated on its axis around the sun. Such knowledge astonished the many people whom he encountered and met because most of them lacked any formal education and because most did not even read. All of their lives, these black people had assumed that the sun rose and set.<sup>14</sup>

Soon, W. D. Fard began joining some of the interested black people for dinner in order to share more of his knowledge with them. Whenever he joined any of the people for dinner, he ate whatever his hosts had cooked, but afterwards, he explained to them what the food that they consumed did to their bodies. W. D. Fard taught them that the people of their homeland did not eat the flesh of the pig, and Fard explained how black people's diets caused many of the diseases and ailments from which they suffered. W. D. Fard told his inquisitive listeners that the names, which they used to identify themselves, marked them as the property of their slavemasters. In less than a year, W. D. Fard had gained a large enough following that the houses in which he customarily held his meetings became too small to accommodate the number of people who wanted to hear this man teach.<sup>15</sup>

Inevitably, the number of people interested in his message forced Fard to rent the basements of local halls in order to teach the black people of Detroit. As Fard's notoriety increased, some of his converts began to propagate his ideas, although, to that point, Fard himself had not appointed anyone to convey his message. Members from another Islamic sect, the Moorish Science Temple of America, along with some former Garveyites, frequented the meetings Wallace D. Fard then held. Since Noble Drew Ali had passed away in 1929 and since the U. S. government had deported Marcus Garvey in 1927,



followers of these two men needed someone to fill the void left by their leaders' absences. Many of these people attended Fard's meetings simply to hear his new doctrine, while others attended hoping to usurp the new information to suit their own purposes. Late in the summer of 1931, Charlie Poole, one of Elijah's younger brothers, went to hear Wallace D. Fard as he addressed an audience in a hall rented for the occasion. Word already had spread through the neighborhood about this man who practiced the religion of Islam and who called white people devils. Up to this point, Elijah Poole had not gone to the meetings because of his reservations about Islam as being a "heathen" religion.<sup>16</sup>

When his younger brother, Charlie, returned home overly excited and shared the information with Elijah about what W. D. Fard had taught in his meeting, at that point, Elijah determined to go hear this Islamic doctrine. Finally, on September 22, 1931, Elijah Poole attended his first meeting at 3208 Hastings in Detroit, Michigan, and at that meeting, Elijah first met W. D. Fard.<sup>17</sup> After Fard finished his sermon, as was his custom, he greeted every member of the audience who wanted to shake his hand or speak a few words to him.

So, Elijah lined up with the rest of the audience still ebullient from what he had heard and intent upon sharing the revelation which occurred to him sometime during Fard's sermon. When his turn came to shake hands with W. D. Fard, Elijah gripped Fard's hand and whispered to him, "You are the One the Bible prophesied would come at the end of the world under the name Son of Man and under the name The Second Coming of Jesus." At first, Fard gave Elijah a grim expression, but then, he smiled and whispered in his ear, "Yes, I am the One, but who knows that but yourself? Be quiet."

After affirming what Elijah had perceived, Wallace D. Fard gently pushed Elijah away and continued to greet the audience. Nobody heard that exchange which took place between Fard and Elijah but themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Prior to Elijah's first meeting with him, W. D. Fard had replaced some of his adherents' "slave names" with their "original names" or attributes. In order to receive a new name, a believer had to submit a perfectly written letter requesting that his/her name be changed. If the letter contained any mistakes, Fard returned the letter to the person who submitted it, but if the letter passed the scrutiny of W. D. Fard, he bestowed an "original name" on the writer at the next meeting. Not long after Elijah Poole had attended his first meeting, he submitted his letter requesting an "original name."<sup>19</sup>

In his letter, Elijah disclosed some details to Wallace D. Fard that he failed to mention to him while in his presence. When the time arrived for the next meeting, Elijah sent his wife, Clara, so that she too heard what Fard taught, while Elijah stayed home with the children. After Fard finished his lessons at the meeting in October of 1931, he asked the audience, "Does anyone know the little man from Hamtramck?" Clara responded that he (Elijah) was her husband. W. D. Fard told Clara to tell Elijah that "he can go ahead and start teaching, and I will back him up." Before that appointment, Fard had allowed the members to choose their teachers, but when he selected Elijah, this was the first time that Fard personally had appointed one of his converts to teach. So, Elijah began teaching Islam in Hamtramck, Michigan in October of 1931.<sup>20</sup>

Shortly after W. D. Fard received Elijah's letter, he conferred on Elijah an "original name," Karriem, which means noble or generous, thus Elijah Poole became Elijah

Karriem. In the following passage, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad recounted his first days of teaching as Elijah Karriem and his first instructions from W. D. Fard:

I started teaching that He was the answer to the prophecy of the coming of Jesus, two thousand years after Jesus' birth, and that this is the Man. I began teaching that the Son of Man, or the second coming of Jesus was present and that this was Him now, here among us. He didn't allow me to go too far with that kind of teaching while He was present. He told me, "you can do that after I am gone." He said, "Don't talk too much about Me." He said, "Give them a little milk. You cannot give babies meat. Give the little baby milk. When I am gone, then you can say whatever you want to about Me."<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps from this excerpt, readers will discern that one of the pillars of the Nation of Islam's ideology is that God is a man—not a spirit or an unknown mystery. Elijah Karriem was the first convert to begin teaching that Wallace D. Fard was God in Person. Because of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, this tenet formed the nucleus of the Nation of Islam's theology. Prior to Elijah's conversion, Fard's students simply thought of him as another prophet.<sup>22</sup>

Elijah Karriem, nonetheless, heeded the instructions of his teacher and discontinued spreading the idea that "God is among us," for Elijah realized that he fully did not comprehend the scriptures. Indeed, Elijah needed to be awakened to the knowledge of God, himself, and the devil. For the next year, W. D. Fard and Elijah Karriem spent days and nights together examining the scriptures, discussing the "worlds," probing what, to that point, had been unexplainable mysteries for Elijah and the "Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the wilderness of North America." Fard also explained his own personal history to Elijah Karriem, preparing him for the days of persecution that he later encountered. One of these mysteries that Fard uncovered for Elijah Karriem dealt with the nature of mankind. All of Elijah's life he had wondered why white people murdered, raped,

kidnapped, and stole from black people, but no person or religion succeeded in quelling his curiosity, until W. D. Fard ended his speculation.

During Elijah Karriem's intense first year of study, he learned from Fard that the "white man is the devil." This revelation alone answered many of the questions to which Elijah had never found answers. Wallace D. Fard supported this idea with historical proof. In fact, Fard gave Elijah Karriem lessons in history, which pre-dated any history Elijah learned in textbooks. From W. D. Fard, Elijah Karriem learned about the creation of God, the creation of the universe, the creation of man, and the making of the devil or mankind. Not only did Fard unveil certain mysteries for Elijah Karriem, but also, he taught Elijah Karriem mathematics, science, and rhetoric. In addition to improving Elijah Karriem's knowledge of various sciences, W. D. Fard increased Elijah's understanding of languages, enhanced his writing skills, and educated Elijah in the art of propaganda. In short, Wallace D. Fard molded and shaped Elijah into the person that he wanted Elijah to be.<sup>23</sup>

In November of 1932, after Fard had drilled Elijah Karriem for about a year and as Fard's following continued to expand in urban Detroit, the Lost-Found Nation of Islam experienced its first major crisis. By that time, literally, thousands of people claimed to be followers of W. D. Fard and thousands more, at least, had heard him teach that "white people are devils." The Detroit Police Department heard about the growing Islamic influence, and this growth became a cause of consternation for the mayor and the city of Detroit. Negro informants and other envious traducers began divulging the "secrets" of Fard's lessons to suspicious police agents. Once authorities discovered that W. D. Fard taught that "white people are devils," they began to closely monitor the meetings, looking

for any pretext to charge Fard with a crime. So, when Robert Harris, a member of the Moorish Science Temple of America, murdered his roommate, James Smith, in their apartment on November 20, Harris' act supplied the impetus for the police to arrest W. D. Fard on November 23, 1932.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, the police failed to establish any link between W. D. Fard and Harris, although they detained Fard for questioning. Meanwhile, a throng of Fard's followers gathered outside the city's jail demanding the release of their teacher and leader. Consequently, in order to avoid a civil disturbance, the police released Fard and admonished him to leave the city of Detroit in November of 1932. W. D. Fard, however, refused to leave his followers and continued to teach them, although Elijah Karriem's role enlarged as a result of that initial encounter with the Detroit Police Department.

In fact, by early 1933, Elijah Karriem had assumed primary ministerial duties of Fard's first Temple of Islam in Detroit, as Fard increasingly receded to the background. W. D. Fard, though, continued to meet with and to instruct his "chosen one," Elijah, and he began to prophesy to Elijah, concerning events which were to test his faith, including persecution and harassment by civil authorities, government officials, and "hypocrites." Also, early in that same year, Elijah Karriem noticed that W. D. Fard began signing his name, W. F. Muhammad, which stood for Wallace Fard Muhammad. Shortly thereafter, Fard sent Elijah to Chicago, where he established Muhammad's Temple No. 2 at 3335 South State Street in the "old Rockefeller Hall."<sup>25</sup>

So sometimes, Elijah Karriem traveled to Chicago to teach in Temple No. 2, while other times he taught in the first temple in Detroit. Concurrently, the Detroit Police Department began to harass the Muslims because some of them refused to send their

children to Detroit's public schools. Master Fard Muhammad, as his adherents then called him, had advised his followers to withdraw their children from the public schools, where the children learned nothing about themselves, and instead, Master Fard Muhammad established a school for his followers in Temple No. 1, the University of Islam. By that time, Master Fard Muhammad already had formed the Fruit of Islam (FOI) and the Muslim Girl's Training and General Civilization Class (MGT & GCC), which served as auxiliary branches of the Nation of Islam. The FOI trained all men and boys in the art of self-defense in order to defend themselves and their families from the aggressions of police or intruders. The MGT & GCC trained women and girls in the art of self-defense and trained them to handle domestic responsibilities, including but not limited to cooking, cleaning, and sewing.<sup>26</sup>

In May of 1933, while Elijah was handling some business for Temple No. 2 in Chicago, the police again arrested Wallace Fard Muhammad, this time, on the charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Immediately, Master Fard Muhammad sent for Elijah Karriem not only to post bail but also, to see the "price that his followers must pay for their beliefs." Concerned that Master Fard Muhammad's arrest might incite his Muslim followers, the police again released Muhammad, but this time they "ordered" him out of the city of Detroit.<sup>27</sup>

Before leaving Detroit, Master Fard Muhammad gave Elijah Karriem some final advice, warnings, and instructions. Master Fard Muhammad admonished Elijah to beware of the hypocrites who were going to misrepresent his teachings, and he bestowed upon Elijah the highest rank next to his, Supreme Minister. In order to authenticate Elijah Karriem's new position, Master Fard Muhammad gave Elijah another name to suit

the job. At first, Master Fard Muhammad wanted to replace Karriem with Abdul, which means servant. Elijah, nevertheless, declined this name because the name reminded him of the hypocrite whom Master Fard Muhammad expelled the previous year, Abdul Muhammad, for trying to introduce some of the Moorish Science Temple of America's doctrine to Master Fard Muhammad's converts.<sup>28</sup>

So, Master Fard Muhammad decided to give Elijah his own personal name; then, Elijah Karriem became Elijah Muhammad. On May 26, 1933, Master Fard Muhammad left the city of Detroit and headed for Chicago. Elijah Muhammad then assumed the role of Supreme Minister, and officially began the permanent directing of Temple No. 1's affairs in Detroit. Elijah Muhammad continued to travel between the cities of Detroit and Chicago, and he maintained contact with Master Fard Muhammad, who continued to diffuse his Islamic teachings in Chicago. In Detroit, though, Elijah Muhammad discovered that a number of Master Fard Muhammad's followers refused to accept him as the Supreme Minister, and they mocked his new name of Muhammad. In fact, some became jealous of Elijah Muhammad, openly defying him and opposing what he taught of Master Fard Muhammad as being God in Person. Others, who had been expelled by Master Fard Muhammad for heresy, seized the opportunity to antagonize Muhammad by establishing rival sects.<sup>29</sup>

Elijah Muhammad, nonetheless, persevered, drawing his strength from "Allah in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad." Also, for the next year, Elijah commuted between Chicago and Detroit, receiving "supreme wisdom" from his teacher. Sometime in June of 1934, the Chicago police arrested Master Fard Muhammad, who immediately sent for his Supreme Minister, Elijah Muhammad, again, in order for Elijah to see the persecution

that his ultimate mission entailed. Like the Detroit authorities, the Chicago authorities “ordered” Master Fard Muhammad out of the city.<sup>30</sup> After his release, some parting words of encouragement, and advice, Master Fard Muhammad boarded an airplane and left Elijah with “the hardest job in America.” Master Fard Muhammad did not say where he was going, but he did tell Elijah that he no longer needed him. Indeed, as secretly as he had arrived, Master Fard Muhammad departed never again to be seen, physically, by his followers.

After Master Fard Muhammad’s departure, Elijah Muhammad returned to Detroit and continued teaching Islam in Temple No. 1, despite the mockery and ridicule of his opponents. When the time arrived for the new school year, Elijah Muhammad and his Muslim followers again refused to send their children to the Detroit public schools. For this reason, the Detroit police arrested a group of Muhammad’s followers and committed them to jail. Upon learning of his followers’ predicament, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad went to the jail and surrendered himself to the authorities. The authorities charged all of the Muslims involved with contributing to the delinquency of a minor. The authorities released the Honorable Elijah Muhammad after giving him six months probation and ordering him to return his children to the public schools. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad rejected the authorities’ injunction, though, and moved to Chicago in September of 1934.<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, as Master Fard Muhammad had warned Elijah, hypocrites and enemies sought to take his life from him in Detroit. Thus, when Elijah relocated his family to Chicago, he moved the headquarters of the movement from Temple No. 1 to Temple No. 2 in order to prevent his opponents from appropriating the organization. In



Detroit, The Honorable Elijah Muhammad placed Marcellars Jordan over Temple No. 1. Indeed, persecution mounted against the Honorable Elijah Muhammad on every front. In 1935 in Chicago, Elijah learned that his enemies in Detroit had placed a bounty of five hundred dollars on his head.<sup>32</sup>

Simultaneously, his Muslim followers experienced another encounter with civil authorities because of a court case centering upon one of the Muslims' sons. On March 5, 1935, a skirmish broke out in the courtroom, which led to the arrest and subsequent jailing of forty-four believers, sixteen men and twenty-eight women. The Muslims, who were unarmed, sustained no casualties or serious injuries, while the head bailiff, Captain Palcynzski, died of a heart attack; also, one of the bailiffs was shot by "friendly fire" during the melee.<sup>33</sup>

In the same year, one of Elijah Muhammad's younger siblings, Kalot Muhammad, rebelled against him and joined the ranks of apostates who sought to replace the Honorable Elijah Muhammad as leader of the Nation of Islam. Eventually, the threats against his life and the rebellion within his own family compelled the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to seek refuge outside of Chicago, Illinois. In fact, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad spent the next seven years evading his enemies and moving from city to city. When he left Chicago in 1935, Elijah first traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he only stayed for about two weeks. While in Milwaukee, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad converted a few people, thereby laying the foundation for Temple No. 3. Next, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad took a train to Washington, D.C., where he rented a room under the name of Mr. Bogans. The landlord noticed that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad did not leave his room to eat for three days, so the landlord finally invited

“Mr. Bogans” to dine with his family. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad accepted the invitation and provided the food for the occasion; that evening, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad converted the entire family to Islam.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, while in Washington, D.C., the Honorable Elijah Muhammad began studying a set of one hundred and four books from a list, which Master Fard Muhammad had given him to read. Accordingly, Elijah spent most of his time studying in the Library of Congress, teaching, praying, and evading his enemies. Between the years of 1935 and 1942, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad wandered up and down the eastern coast from Boston to Atlanta. These seven years proved to be the most crucial years to Elijah’s mission as the “Messenger of Allah,” for these years were replete with trials and tribulations. In every city that Muhammad visited, he only remained for a brief period, normally about two weeks, sometimes staying with poor people and other times lodging with rich people.<sup>35</sup> In every city that he visited, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad converted some people, thereby securing a network of contacts, which later facilitated his establishment of various temples along the East Coast. While living this transient lifestyle, Elijah periodically checked on his family in Chicago and the affairs of headquarters, Temple No. 2.

By 1942, the United States had declared war on Germany; therefore, the selective service began drafting men to fight in the war. When the followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad resisted the draft board on the basis of their religion, government officials realized that an unneeded crisis might occur because of the Muslims’ refusal to register with the selective service. So, on the orders of President Roosevelt, federal authorities arrested the Honorable Elijah Muhammad on May 8, 1942 and charged him

with draft evasion. At that time, the U. S. government drafted men between the ages of eighteen and forty-four. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad refused to enlist not only because his religion forbade him to fight in wars but also, because his forty-fifth birthday was in October, which technically made him over forty-four years of age. Later, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad learned through federal agents that President Roosevelt ordered his arrest so that he did not disrupt the draft board's procedures for selecting men to fight in World War II.<sup>36</sup>

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad spent approximately two and a half months in jail in Washington, D.C. before he was released on a bail of five thousand dollars, which his wife, Clara, brought from Chicago. Once released, Elijah's attorney advised him to get out of Washington, D.C. because "they are planning to get you tonight." Consequently, Clara and Elijah Muhammad boarded the first available train and returned to Chicago in August of 1942. Eventually, authorities arrested Elijah and his male followers in Chicago and throughout the country. Elijah spent approximately eleven months in a Chicago jail while awaiting trial. After his trial, the court sentenced Elijah Muhammad to five years in prison, which he served in the Federal Correctional Institute in Milan, Michigan. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad ended up serving a total of about four years and four months behind bars, spending approximately three and one-half years incarcerated in Milan, Michigan.<sup>37</sup>

While incarcerated, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad converted several inmates, causing them to become model prisoners. Initially, the prison forced the believers to eat pork or to go hungry, but as the warden observed the effect that the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had on the prisoners, he began accommodating their

religion, which forbade the consumption of pork. Also while in prison, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad managed to establish two more temples. During that time, his wife, Clara Muhammad, tended to the business of headquarters and continued to raise their eight children with the help of the other sisters who converted to Islam.<sup>38</sup> After the war ended in August of 1945, federal prisons that housed Elijah's followers began releasing them in succession. Finally, on August 26, 1946, the Federal Correctional Institute at Milan, Michigan released the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. When the authorities brought Elijah to Chicago, they told him, "now you can go ahead and teach what you want."<sup>39</sup>

Following the war and the release of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam experienced a period of steady growth. Elijah emerged from prison with a renewed vigor and a heightened understanding of Master Fard's teachings to him. Shortly after his release, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad purchased an "old animal hospital" located at 824 E. 43<sup>rd</sup> Street on Chicago's South Side. The Nation of Islam cleaned and renovated the building, relocating the headquarters to that site. This building not only served as the Nation of Islam's mosque, but also, the building functioned as the school for the believers and their children.<sup>40</sup>

At that time in 1946, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had established four Muhammad's Temples: Temple No. 1 in Detroit, Temple No. 2 in Chicago, Temple No. 3 in Milwaukee, and Temple No. 4 in Washington, D.C. Also, during the seven-year period between 1935 and 1942, while traveling up and down the East Coast, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad laid the foundation for temples which opened later in the cities of Baltimore, New York, Atlantic City, Boston (Roxbury), Philadelphia,

Springfield, and Atlanta. Moreover, while in prison in Milan, Michigan, Muhammad built the base for temples which opened in the Midwestern cities of Cincinnati, Youngstown, Lansing, and Joliet.

Furthermore, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's confinement in prison also allowed him to develop the NOI's prison ministry program, which eventually "caught a fish" named Malcolm Little in 1948. In July of 1947, the Nation of Islam, under the leadership of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, opened a grocery store and restaurant at 3117 Wentworth on Chicago's South Side. The store differed from other black grocery stores in that it only offered its customers "kosher" foods. One did not enter a Muslim store and expect to purchase pork, catfish, or other forbidden meats. The restaurant offered the community an opportunity to eat freshly cooked meals prepared with the most nutritious ingredients available. Both of these businesses provided services to the community at fair and equitable rates, usually, lower than competing businesses.<sup>41</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Nation of Islam began to flourish after the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's release from prison. "Messenger Muhammad" succeeded by adhering to the instructions of his teacher, "Allah in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad." Members of the Nation of Islam opened restaurants, stores, barber shops, bakeries, and clothing stores, contributing a percentage of their yields to the community of believers under the directorate of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.<sup>42</sup> Under the guidance of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, very little changed in the operation of the organization since its earliest years of 1930-1934. Converts still submitted letters requesting membership in the organization, and followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad bore witness that Master Fard Muhammad was God in Person.

The ascendancy of the Nation of Islam directly related to its theology, which centered upon the idea that God is a Man and the devil is a kind of man. The centrality of this doctrine made the Nation of Islam's concept of black nationalism a religious idea. All matters outside of the Nation of Islam's theology, in the opinion of this researcher, were secondary catalysts to the NOI's rise. Some scholars and historians have classified the movement as an economic form of black nationalism, but a close examination of the NOI's history proves that the movement succeeded because of its theology. In fact, without its theology, the Nation of Islam lacked the foundation to build an economic empire or to endure the test of time.

---

Notes

## Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad* (Atlanta: Khan's Bookstore, n.d.), Nation of Islam documentary.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Clegg, *An Original Man*, 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Hakim, *The True History of Elijah Muhammad*, 35.

<sup>8</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Clegg, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Clegg, 17.

<sup>12</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>13</sup> Beynon, "The Voodoo Cult," 896.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 902.

<sup>16</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>17</sup> Jabril Muhammad, *This Is The One* (Phoenix: Jabril Muhammad, 1993), 150.

<sup>18</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *History of the Nation of Islam*, 1.

<sup>19</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>20</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *History of the Nation of Islam*, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Hakim, 37.

<sup>22</sup> Lincoln, *The Black Muslims*, 181-82.

<sup>23</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *The True History of Master Fard Muhammad*, xl-xlvi.

<sup>24</sup> Beynon, 903.

<sup>25</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Jabril Muhammad, 152.

<sup>29</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>30</sup> Clegg, 35-36.

<sup>31</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>32</sup> Jabril Muhammad, 162.

<sup>33</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Jabril Muhammad, 162.

<sup>36</sup> Hakim, 49.

<sup>37</sup> Jabril Muhammad, 162.

<sup>38</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>39</sup> Hakim, 49.

<sup>40</sup> *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*, NOI documentary.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



## CHAPTER V

### VOICES FROM THE PAST

When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions . . . He will find his "proper Place" and stand in it.

Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson

In this chapter, the researcher creates a dialogue between the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, using their teachings and focusing upon the themes of black nationalism, God, and racial purity. This chapter allows readers to discern for themselves how these two black leaders differed in terms of ideology. The format for the dialogue is blunt and straightforward. As the examiner, the researcher poses questions which allow both men to elaborate. Since this is a hypothetical exchange, the researcher uses exact quotations from speeches and/or writings of both men to answer the questions posed.<sup>1</sup>

One purpose of the dialogue is to accentuate the differences between Garvey's and Muhammad's ideas concerning God and specific aspects of their respective theologies. Another purpose of the exchange is to allow both leaders' own words to demonstrate some strengths and weaknesses of their programs with respect to the advancement and development of black people in the United States. On some issues, if the answers are not of equal length or if one leader receives more space to elaborate than the other leader, then the reason, in most cases, is directly related to the amount of time the leaders spent dealing with the issue. As the examiner, the researcher merely asks questions which lead

readers to a better understanding of the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. No attempt is made to mediate where differences occur because the intention is to display such differences.

**Examiner:** Welcome to station A. K. I. L. Today, the guests are the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, two leaders with plans for black people in America. Both of these men claim to have the solution to the problems of black people in America. Both men believe that their respective solutions represent the only way for black people to overcome the nemeses of oppression, subjugation, and exploitation in America. Both men's opponents, critics, and detractors have labeled them as black supremacists, and these same antagonists charge the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad with wanting to foment a war among the races.

Well, today, in refutation of such charges, both men have agreed to answer questions about and outline their programs for black people in the United States. Both men have agreed to meet today, not to debate one another, but to allow their words to speak for them. Thank you both for being here today and for agreeing to answer questions pertaining to the advancement of black people in America. Let's not waste any more time and let's get straight to the issues. First of all, please tell the audience a little about your backgrounds and when you began to propagate your specific solutions to the black predicament. Mr. Garvey you can go first.

**Garvey:** I was born on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, 1887, in the island of Jamaica, British West Indies. My parents were Negroes. My father was a man of brilliant intellect, and in his youth, of dashing courage . . . My mother was a sober and conscientious Christian of the soft and good-natured kind . . . I grew up in my home town, St. Ann's Bay, to the age of 14. There I attended grammar, public and high schools. I found myself afterward in the metropolis of the island, where I lived for some time continuing my studies. At the age of 18 I started to take interest in public affairs. The politics of my country so

disgusted me that I started to travel, in which course I visited several countries in South and Central America and in Europe. By the age of 21, I had further added to my education. I spent three years in Europe, which broadened my outlook on human affairs, particularly of the Negro race . . . I arrived in America in the spring of 1916, after which I started to study the sociological, economical and political status of the Negroes of America. This took me through 38 states. It was after my return from these trips to New York that I founded in New York the New York division of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.<sup>2</sup>

**Muhammad:** I was born in Georgia, went to the public school in Georgia and was never out of the State of Georgia until I was 25 years of age. I married and had two children and moved to Detroit in April, 1923, from Macon, Georgia, where I worked for the Southern Railroad Company and the Cherokee Brick Company, the latter as a tramroad foreman and builder . . . I was brought up in a Baptist church. When I was a little boy, my father was a preacher at that time; I was in his church. I use to sit on the minister's lap, because my grandmother would let me go up in the pulpit with my father and he would run me out, because I was a very preacher little boy myself. I love to hear people preach, but I didn't love to hear no one singing . . . they would frighten me . . . I used to go to church and the preacher would preach that hell fire. It looked so plain to me that I would be afraid to go home. I mean, they could preach it in those days. Now the day has come for the fire, to light upon those who are not the righteous. I first heard of Islam in Detroit, Michigan, back in the early fall of 1931. I heard that there was a man teaching Islam by the name of Mr. Wallace Fard . . . When I heard what was said, I wanted to meet Him. Finally I met Him . . . About a month later, He told my wife to tell me to go ahead and start teaching out there in Hamtramck, Michigan.<sup>3</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, will you briefly outline the goals of your organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association?

**Garvey:** To establish a Universal Confraternity among the Race, To promote the Spirit of Race Pride and Love. To reclaim the fallen of the Race; to administer to, and help the Needy; to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa. To strengthen the imperialism of Basutoland, Liberia, etc.; to establish commissioners in the principal countries of the world, for the protection of all Negroes, irrespective of Nationality. To promote a conscientious Christian Worship among the Native Tribes of Africa. To establish universities, colleges and secondary schools for the further education and culture of our boys and girls. Our Motto: One God, One Aim, One Destiny.<sup>4</sup>

**Examiner:** Now, Mr. Muhammad, will you outline some of the wants of the Nation of Islam?

**Muhammad:** We want freedom. We want a full and complete freedom. We want justice, Equal justice under the law. We want justice applied equally to all, regardless of creed, class or color. We want equality of opportunity. We want equal membership in society with the best in civilized society. We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were descendants from slaves to be allowed to establish a separate state or territory of their own—either on this continent or elsewhere. We believe that our former slave masters are obligated to provide such land and that the area must be fertile and minерally rich. We believe that our former slave masters are obligated to maintain and supply our needs in this separate territory for the next 20 to 25 years until we are able to produce and supply our own needs. Since we cannot get along with them in peace and equality, after giving them 400 years of our sweat and blood, receiving in return some of the worst treatment human beings have ever experienced, we believe our contributions to this land and the suffering forced upon us by white America, justifies our demand for complete separation in a state or territory of our own. We want freedom for all Believers of Islam now held in federal prisons in the north as well as in the south. We want every black man and woman to have the freedom to accept or reject being separated from the slave masters' children and establish a land of their own. We know that the above plan for the solution of the black and white conflict is the best and only answer to the problem between two people.<sup>5</sup>

**Examiner:** From what you gentlemen have stated, it is clear that you both seek to establish an independent, black nation. Mr. Garvey, you said that the motto of the UNIA is One God, One Aim, and One Destiny. Will you please explain your understanding of God, since this idea drives the black experience in America?

**Garvey:** There is a God and we believe in Him. He is not a person nor a physical being. He is a spirit and He is universal intelligence. Never deny that there is a God. God being universal intelligence created the universe out of that intelligence. It is the intelligence that creates. Man is part of the creation of universal intelligence and man was created in the image and likeness of God only by his intelligence. It is the intelligence of man that is like God, but man's intelligence is only a unitary particle of God's universal intelligence. God out of His universal intelligence made matter and made mind. That matter is made by God and man is matter as well as mind; then man must be in the image of God, because nothing could exist without God . . . All the unitary intelligence of the universe goes to make God who is the embodiment of all intelligence, so no man can be great as God because he is only a unit of God and God is the whole. No man therefore can measure God nor ask God questions because he is not as intelligent as God and therefore cannot understand God.<sup>6</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Muhammad, your response . . .

**Muhammad:** Can God be a Mystery God and yet send prophets to represent Himself? Have the prophets been representing a God that is not known (Mystery)? They tell us that they heard God's voice speaking to them in their own language. Can a spirit speak a language while being an immaterial something? If God is not material, what pleasure would He get out of material beings and the material universe? What is the basis of spirit? Is the spirit independent of material? . . . If your God were a mystery, you and I would be mystery people. If He were a Spirit and not a man, we would all be spirits and not human beings! If he were a mystery of only a Spirit, the prophets could not have predicted the coming of that which no one has knowledge of or of a spirit which cannot be seen, only felt . . . Can one teach that which he himself does not know?<sup>7</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, will you explain the reasoning behind your introduction of a black Jesus to black churches?

**Garvey:** If the white man has the idea of a white God, let him worship his God as he desires. If the yellow man's God is of his race let him worship his God as he sees fit. We, as Negroes, have found a new ideal. Whilst our God has no color, yet it is human to see everything through one's own spectacles, and since the white people have seen their God through white spectacles, we have only now started out (late though it be) to see our God through our own spectacle. The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob let Him exist for the race that believes in the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. We Negroes believe in the God of Ethiopia, the everlasting God—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, the One God of all ages. That is the God in whom we believe, but we shall worship Him through the spectacles of Ethiopia.<sup>8</sup>

**Muhammad:** The Christians refer to God as a Mystery and a Spirit and divide Him into thirds. One part they call the Father, another part the Son, and the third part they call the Holy Ghost—which makes the three, one. This is contrary to both nature and mathematics. The law of mathematics will not allow us to put three into one . . . The Christians do not believe in God as being a human being, yet they believe in Him as being the Father of all human beings. They also refer to God as He, Him, Man, King and The Ruler. They teach that God sees, hears, talks, walks, stands, sits, rides and flies; that He grieves or sorrows; and that He is interested in the affairs of human beings . . . They preach and prophesy of His coming and that He will be seen on the Judgment Day but is not a man. They cannot tell us what He looks like, yet man is made like Him and in the image of God, and yet they still say that He is a mystery (unknown) . . . In the meantime, while they admit that he is a Mystery God (unknown), they teach not to make any likeness of Him; yet they

adorn their walls and churches with pictures, images and statues like human beings.<sup>9</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, you say that God has no color, but you suggest to black churches that they should put up a black picture of God. Are you equating Jesus with God, then?

**Garvey:** The doctrine of God carries with it the belief of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Christ is supposed to be the begotten Son of God. He had a special mission and that was to take on the form of man, to teach man how to lift himself back to God. For that reason Christ was born as man and came to the world . . . The New Testament reveals the life of Christ as an exemplary one. His life was faultless to a word. It is evident, therefore, that he must have been a superior creature. If he had played the devil and behaved like the devil there would have been no example to lead us to the perfection of God. So that his life was perfect is evident and fair assumption that he was the begotten Son of God. The greatest thing that Christ taught was love. Love thy neighbor as thyself, do unto others as you would have them do to you. In these statements are wrapt up the highest idealism of a Godhead in the relationship of a father with his children. There has been no greater philosophy in the history of mankind. Support this philosophy and never change until God manifests himself to the contrary, which is not likely. It is evident that Christ had in his veins the blood of all mankind and belonged to no particular race. Christ was God in the perfect sense of his mind and soul. His spirit was truly God's spirit, his soul which acted on the advice of God's spirit was never corrupt.<sup>10</sup>

**Muhammad:** How could Jesus' birth and death 2,000 years ago serve as the price of sin and peace (reconciling God and the man of sin), of the world as the average Christian believes? . . . It just can't be put in the past without disgracing the All Wise God's intelligent knowledge of the future. Let the poor so-called Negroes' minds relax for a few minutes, . . . and use common sense. (1<sup>st</sup>) if Jesus were to have a flesh and blood body, He must be produced as we were, by the agency of man, who had flesh and blood. If God produces one other than by man, He breaks His own law. And we could not be held responsible for breaking the same law (getting children out of wedlock). (2<sup>nd</sup>) The world has never been without a righteous people on it. Could not God produce a son or prophet from a righteous couple as He had in the past? . . . Read the birth and death of Jesus as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Think it over. Would God have permitted such thing to happen 2,000 years ago with such evil results following afterward? . . . There have been more wars and more evil, since the birth and death of Jesus than ever before. Jesus didn't bring peace to the world, according to the Bible.<sup>11</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Muhammad, since you contend that Jesus had to be produced as we were, please explain your understanding of Jesus' birth.

**Muhammad:** Jesus' birth and ministry would bring about the end of Jewish independence. Therefore, Jesus' birth and place could not be revealed. The Number one secret was that Joseph and Mary were not married. Yet, Mary was pregnant. How could they hide this thing? This was the great problem facing them. They wanted to marry, but could not because of the objection by Mary's father to Joseph because he was the son of a poor man and he was a rich man. Joseph was now married to another woman for the past six years and had six children by his wife. Yet Mary was his childhood sweetheart, and they had promised to marry each other when they grew up to marriageable age . . . Mary's father was a big wealthy man and a great architect. The old man had to go away to another town . . . After the man leaves on his journey, a great dust storm comes up, which made it very dark . . . During the storm, Mary becomes frightened and sends a message to Joseph, telling him that her father had gone away and that he would be away for three days . . . She asked Joseph to come over and help her to take care of everything and that he would be company for her. Joseph tells his wife that he has to go off on a little business. He came over to Mary's house . . . Jesus was born as all human beings; flesh and blood, and he died as all human beings; in the flesh of which he was made.<sup>12</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, your faith, as stated earlier, requires that you subscribe to the notion of the Godhead. Will you explain your understanding of this Holy Trinity?

**Garvey:** The Doctrine Of The Trinity of God The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost is not commonly understandable to the ordinary mind that will not think in the guiding spirit of God, but to the mind that thinks with the spirit of God it is very pleasingly understood that the Godhead is one in three parts all related and all doing good; you cannot separate them. This may be a mystery which the ordinary intelligence of man cannot explain because man is not God in intelligence, but nevertheless it explains the riddle of the universe . . . The Holy Ghost is the perfect spirit of God's intelligence which is distinct from matter as particles of creation. No particle can exist in nature without the knowledge of God because God created it, but a particle may not contain the spirit of the Holy Ghost. When life is given and thought is to be expressed, there we have the sprit of the Holy Ghost . . . The spirit is greater than all and it is the Holy Ghost and God in man. The spirit advises the soul, guides the soul and guards the soul and when it is disgusted with the behavior of the soul, it leaves the physical body and the physical body does what we call die, but in fact the physical body does not die, it changes back to matter in a different form . . . Man was redeemed by Christ to reach the perfect state as man



through his soul. The symbol of the Christ was the Cross in sentiment, therefore, man adores the Cross.<sup>13</sup>

**Muhammad:** Who is this Holy Ghost that is classified as being the equal of the father and the son? . . . This teaching of a mystery God enslaves the minds of the ignorant. My poor people are victims of every robber. They are so pitifully blind, deaf, and dumb that it hurts, but I am going to prove to them that I am with Allah (God) and that Allah is with me . . . Can you, who believe in a mystery God (unknown), trust your Mystery to bring you bread or to defend you against your open enemies? If so, on what occasion did He help you? If God is a mystery, you are lying to the world when you say that you know Him. He wants to be known, it is His enemy (the devil) who does not want God to be known to you and me . . . Did God say that He was a Mystery God, or did someone say it of Him? Did God say that He was only a Spirit, or did someone say it of Him? The most important question of all questions that one could ask is “Who is God?” It is like a child who does not know his father asking his mother to tell him the name of his father, wanting to know what his father looks like and if he favors his father. Can we not ask the same question who are seeking the knowledge of Our Father, God?<sup>14</sup>

**Garvey:** It is preposterous for man to say that he can analyze God in his completeness because man is only a finite and small unit of Divine and universal intelligence, hence his limited intelligence cannot ascend completely to universal intelligence. So whilst universal intelligence can analyze unitary intelligence, unitary intelligence cannot analyze universal intelligence. So leave out trying to be like God by demanding from God in mental analysis why he does or why he does not do the other thing. You are not competent. No part is greater than the whole. The whole is always greater than any single part and man is only a single part of God, so he cannot be as great in mind as God.<sup>15</sup>

**Muhammad:** God is a man and we just cannot make Him other than man, lest we make Him an inferior one; for man’s intelligence has no equal in other than man. His wisdom is infinite; capable of accomplishing anything that His brain can conceive. A spirit is subjected to us and not we to the spirit . . . The great archdeceivers (the white race) were taught by their father, Yakub, 6,000 years ago, how to teach that God is a spirit (spook) and not a man. In the grafting of his people (the white race), Mr. Yakub taught his people to contend with us over the reality of God by asking us of the whereabouts of that first One (God) who created the heavens and the earth, and that Yakub said, we cannot do. Well, we all know that there was a God in the beginning that created all these things and do know that He does not exist today. But we know again that from that God the person of God continued until today in His people, and today a Supreme One (God) has appeared among us with the same infinite wisdom to bring about a complete change. This is He whom I preach and teach you to believe and obey.<sup>16</sup>



**Examiner:** Mr. Muhammad, since you say God has appeared among us in person, please tell the audience who this God is and when he appeared.

**Muhammad:** One of the main things that one must learn is to distinguish between the history of Jesus two thousand years ago and the prophecy of the Jesus 2,000 years ago, which often proves to be that of the Great Mahdi, the Restorer of the Kingdom of Peace on Earth, Who came to America in 1930 under the name of W. D. Fard. Later, he'd admitted that he was Mr. Wallace Fard Muhammad, the One Whom the world had been looking for to come for the past 2,000 years. According to the Holy Qur'an's chapter and verse which we have under discussion, the name Messiah, the meaning—fits that of the Mahdi more than any other man. The Mahdi is a world traveler. He told me that He had traveled the world over and that He had visited North America for 20 years before making Himself known to us, His people whom He came for. He had visited the Isle of the Pacific, Japan and China, Canada, Alaska, the North Pole, India, Pakistan, all of the Near East and Africa. He had studied the wild life in the jungles of Africa and learned the language of the birds. He could speak 16 languages and could write 10 of them. He visited every inhabited place on the earth and had pictured and extracted the language of the people on Mars and had a knowledge of all life in the universe. He could recite by heart the histories of the world as far back as 150,000 years and knew the beginning and end of all things.<sup>17</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, it is clear that Mr. Muhammad equates men with Gods. What are your views on men?

**Garvey:** Man because of his sin which caused him to have fallen from his high estate of spiritual cleanliness to the level of a creature, who acts only for his own satisfaction by the gift of freewill, must be regarded as a dangerous creature of life. When he wants he can be good, otherwise he is generally bad. In dealing with him you must calculate for his vices and his damnable evils. He is apt to disappoint you at any time therefore you cannot wholly rely on him as an individual. Always try to touch him with the hope of bringing out that which is good, but be ever on your guard to experience the worst that is in him, because he is always in conflict with himself between good and evil. When he can profit from evil he will do it and forget goodness. This has been his behavior ever since the first record of his existence and his first contact with his fellows. Cain slew Abel for his success. Jacob robbed Esau of his birthright and down the ages of human history man has been robbing, exploiting and murdering man for gain.<sup>18</sup>

**Examiner:** According to what you say, Mr. Garvey, man is naturally evil and has been this way since Cain slew Abel. Please give the audience more of your philosophy on Adam and Eve, Creation, and the Universe in general.

**Garvey:** It is said that God is behind the Universe. No man has ever seen God. Suppose you, like Christ, could see God. What a wonder and amazement! Christ saw God behind the Universe as Man. Christ was an object lesson to man's glorification and knowledge, therefore if you approach thought with its deepest sublimity you may see as much as Christ saw when he saw God. It is thought that created the Universe. It is thought that will master the Universe . . . As we look at things we see that the great world in which we live has undergone much change since the time of the creation. When God created the world, and all therein, He Handed His authority over to the two beings He created in His own image; namely, Adam and Eve. From the time of Adam and Eve the human race has multiplied by leaps and bounds. Where we once had two persons to exercise authority over the world, we today have one billion five hundred millions claiming authority and possession of the same world that was once the property of the two. Adam and Eve were black, their two children, Cain and Abel, were black. When Cain slew Abel and God appeared to ask him for his brother he was so shocked that he turned white, being the affliction of leprosy and as such, he became the progenitor of a new race out of double sin. The white man is Cain transformed, hence his career of murder from Cain to Mussolini. It is evident and fair assumption that when Cain ran away and disappeared from the neighborhood of his parents and journeyed afar, he built up a new race, living in the same country but far away. . . . The white race of Cain hid in caves for centuries. Therefore, their white skin became fixed as most of the time they were hidden from the light.<sup>19</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Muhammad, what are your thoughts on Adam and Eve, man, the universe, and God?

**Muhammad:** We are going into the theology of time and history of the people . . . We're going at the root of the creation of the white race and how there came to be a white race on our planet. As you use to think and I use to think the same, that God made them all at once, No! Or that the white man was first, No! . . . It is not possible for black babies to be born out from white parents, no. That black one has got to come first and let the white one come after it. You can't bring them both here together. "Let us make man," remember that phrase: "Let Us make man." Well, if we have to make man, then what were we? Who was the Us that must make man? . . . That man that didn't come with the Sun, Moon, and Stars is not referred to as the Man. The human made into man is called a human man and not to be called Man. Man is you and I. The white man is called mankind, and he knows himself to be that.

He refers to himself as mankind. In the Bible, it says He made him like man, but he yet was not the man . . . When he says mankind, he's referring to white people; he's not referring to you. You are not to be called or represent yourselves as mankind. You are not a kind-of- like man; you are the real man. "And the Lord said Let us make man;" think over that . . . We are the God that made him . . . Adam in the Bible, you have never understood who Adam was. You have been calling Adam your father, Adam is not your father!<sup>20</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Muhammad, if I understand your earlier comments concerning God correctly, you are saying that this man, Wallace Fard Muhammad is God in Person, yet he is not the same God who created the universe in the beginning. How can this be if God is unchanging, alpha and omega, and infinite?

**Muhammad:** Allah in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad, to Whom praises are due forever, taught me that there are not any gods Who live forever. Their wisdom and work may live six thousand or twenty-five thousand years, but the actual individual may have died within a hundred or two hundred years, or the longest that we have a record of, around a thousand years. There is no God living Who was here in the Creation of the Universe, but They produce Gods from Them and Their Wisdom lives in us. Human Beings are created according to the life of the Universe (planets). Master Fard Muhammad, to Whom praises are due forever, taught me that the Original Designer and Maker of the Universe created it on time and there is an end to it . . . The Wisdom of Each God, according to what Allah (God), in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad, to Whom praises are due forever, taught me, has a cycle of twenty-five thousand years. Once every twenty-five thousand years, another God would be given a chance to show forth His Wisdom to the people . . . This is compared to the circumference of our earth at the equator, which is approximately twenty-five thousand miles. This is also compared with the rotation of our earth or the change at the poles which also makes a complete change once every twenty-five thousand years . . . The Present God's (Master Fard Muhammad's) Wisdom is infinite. No Scientist can see an end to This Man's Wisdom coming in the future. That is why the Bible and the Holy Qur'an refer to Him as The Greatest and Wisest of Them All and say that He will set up a Kingdom (Civilization) that will live forever.<sup>21</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, what do you say to Mr. Muhammad's idea that Man is God and God is Man? What do you say to Mr. Muhammad's belief that Master Fard Muhammad is God?

**Garvey:** There is a God. No man can say there is no God, because no man is like God. Man is limited in his intelligence at the most and man knows how insufficient he is between life and death—that he is born without his knowledge and dies without his will or wish; when his birth and death must logically and naturally be controlled by somebody else. It could not be man because man is always man whether he be big man or small man. So power that gives birth and causes death must be greater than man's power. Whatsoever that power is it must be an absolute power. Some men call it by different names but all mean the same thing and it is God. When man, therefore, says there is no God, he is a fool for he is not as great as God. Join no man in saying there is no God, and join no man in saying he is God for it is blasphemy. Fear God, but love God. If you love God, you need not fear God, for God is with you, and you are part of him in your goodness.<sup>22</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, according to your beliefs, Jesus is the begotten Son of God.

Will you give more of your philosophy on Jesus Christ?

**Garvey:** Christ was God in the perfect sense of his mind and soul. His spirit was truly God's spirit, his soul which acted on the advice of God's spirit was never corrupt. Christ's soul was the free-will thought of all men. Whilst other men with their free-will souls become corrupt and do evil even under the guidance of the Holy spirit of God, Christ with his free-will soul never disobeyed the Holy Spirit guide of God. In every man there is the spirit of God, that is to say, that which is there to advise you and direct you to do good always, and in each man also is the free-will soul which is the mind. Each may accept the good guidance of the Holy Spirit or refuse to obey entirely. Man generally disobeys the Holy Spirit of goodness and therefore, becomes sinful. Christ never disobeyed the Holy Spirit of goodness, and that was why he was the Son of man with whom the spirit of God was well pleased, because he lived a life so perfect as was intended when God made Adam and Eve . . . The life of Christ is intended to show man that he could lift himself by obedience to the highest soul expression in keeping with the Holy Spirit of God of which he is part, but only with free-will. A free will can do as he likes. Man has a body, a soul which is his own identification of himself and the Holy Spirit of God. Man was redeemed by Christ . . . The symbol of the Christ was the Cross . . . The black man has a greater claim to the Cross than all other men. If it is a symbol of Christ's triumph then the Negro should share in that triumph that Simon the Cyrenian who bore it, did. Every Negro should claim the Cross as Simon the Cyrenian did . . . The shortest prayer we may give to God, even if we never pray otherwise, is by making the sign of the cross and by saying at the same time, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost . . . The Cross is the heritage of the black man, don't give it up!<sup>23</sup>

**Muhammad:** Jesus (Isa) of 2,000 years ago cannot do us any good nor harm. It is outright ignorance to believe that He can. We should be intelligent

enough to believe in that which can be or has been proven true. Making the Son and the Holy Ghost the equal with the Father is absolutely sinful. There is no proof that there was or ever shall be a time when people will return to life after they are physically dead. There is no proof that God was the father of Mary's son, nor is there proof that He is alive some place waiting to return for the Judgment . . . The very emblem of CHRISTIANITY IS disgraceful to the righteous: a cross and the image of a man nailed thereon with a crown of thorns on his head and a wound in his heart. Such signs the so-called Negroes should never look at and they should hate and abominate the one who offers them such ghastly and shameful emblems. Most times the crucified figure is nude except for a strip of cloth over his private parts. This is the very way that they lynch so-called Negroes; mutilating their bodies and then offering you a piece of the rope that the man was hung with as a warning to you that you will be next . . . Take a look at the cross. It's the sign of murder. If you will follow a murderer for life, what life could he give you if he's a murderer? He put up a sign for you and I to worship. If we're going to worship a sign of a murderer or worship a murderer, then what are we looking for? Death . . . Allah does not have a set time for you and me to die. We kill ourselves . . . We are looking for death . . . I don't want to argue with you. I just want to tell you outright that you see any man or woman worshipping the cross, calling it the sign that leads them to their salvation, they should be taken and put in the insane asylum. That's no sign of life, that's a sign of death. See how far you're off? You are off from the knowledge of what you are given. If a man gives you that cross and then tells you that you're following Jesus to Heaven, you ought to bust his face open. The enemy has molded you into death.<sup>24</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Muhammad, will you explain how the universe came to be, its beginning and how "The First God" came to be?

**Muhammad:** You can't calculate the hour, the day nor the year of the Creation; it's impossible. There were no writers there at the Creation, because the Creation had to make a writer out of himself, first. It was six trillion years after that when writing took place. This was after His own creation. I can be called a liar like all the others before me, who were prophets, and reformers of people. I don't expect you to give me the credit but you will grow into do that. I'm telling you today, but you'll grow into it tomorrow . . . This Earth was made for you. Your Father and my Father created the Earth for us—Black people. It was not created for White people: it was created for Black people. I want you to know that, the God of the Black man. How came the Black God, Mr. Muhammad? He is self-created. How could Self Create Self? Take your magnifying glass and start looking at these little atoms out here in front of you . . . Having made Itself out of an atom of water that was found in the darkness of the universe, we could not see light emerging out of the space without water, because we can't produce life without water; therefore, it was water out there in that darkened world of space . . . close your eyes . . . imagine the

whole entire visibility of the Universe is gone from you. This is the way He was born; in total darkness. There was no light anywhere. Out of the total orbit of the Universe of darkness there sparkled an atom of life. Once upon a time; but don't ask me when it was. How could that atom of life make a record of its own creation? It could not write its own creation, the record of it, because He was the First; there was no recorders around Him. He was First to record His Ownself . . . He had to wait until the atom of life produced brains to think what He needed . . . In that darkness, which had no end to it there—that Darkness Created an atom of Life and the Color had to be Black as there was no light; therefore it had to be the Color of the thing that Created it! All Praise is due to Allah!<sup>25</sup>

**Examiner:** Gentlemen, I have so many more questions that I want to ask but in the interest of time, we must move forward. Please give the audience your closing statements on your different religions or theologies. Mr. Garvey, will you first summarize Christianity and your understanding of this religion?

**Garvey:** Religion is one's opinion and belief in some ethical truth. To be a Christian is to have the religion of Christ, and so to be a believer of Mohammed is to be a Mohammedan but there are so many religions that every man seems to be a religion unto himself. No two persons think alike, even if they outwardly profess the same faith so we have as many religions in Christianity as we have believers . . . I am not one of those Christians who believes that the Bible can solve all the problems of humanity. The Bible is good in its place, but we are men. We are the creatures of God. We have sinned against Him, therefore it takes more than the Bible to keep us in our places. Man is becoming so vile that to-day we cannot afford to convert him with moral, ethical, physical truths alone, but with that which is more effective. . . . Christianity . . . A form of religion practised by the millions, but as misunderstood, and unreal to the majority as gravitation is to the untutored savage. We profess to live in the atmosphere of Christianity, yet our acts are as barbarous as if we never knew Christ. He taught us to love, yet we hate; to forgive yet we revenge; to be merciful, yet we condemn and punish, and still we are Christians. If hell is what we are taught it is, then there will be more Christians there than days in all creation. To be a true Christian one must be like Christ and practice Christianity, not as the Bishop does but as he says for if our lives were to be patterned after the other fellow's all of us, Bishop, Priest and Layman would ultimately meet around the furnace of hell, and none of us because of our sins would see salvation.<sup>26</sup>

**Muhammad:** Islam is not a religion. We call it a religion, but it's not a religion, because it is the nature of us. The nature of us can't be called a religion. The white man was made to take all black people out of their



religion; not just one, but all. He has gone all over the earth taking black people out of their original way of life . . . You were made a Christian, but you were born a Muslim. We were created Muslim. From the very beginning, our Father Who created the Heavens and the Earth was a Muslim. We who are from Him are Muslims by nature; therefore, you don't join Islam to become a Muslim, you just come on back to Islam, into what you were created to be . . . The church can't tell you that you are a Christian by nature; they can't do it. They tell you that you are a Christian by faith and hopes, but you are born a righteous person. Muslim means a righteous person . . . Let the so-called Negroes take a second look at the Bible; every word which white Christians want Black men to believe in from God. There is no mention of a religion by the name of Christianity from God or the prophets . . . Jesus did not teach in his time what today we call Christianity. He knew nothing about Christianity in those days. He had never heard of such. Jesus taught in his times the same religion that Moses taught—Islam. Islam means entire submission to the will of Allah (God) . . . Its primary significance is the making of peace, and the idea of "Peace" is the dominant idea in Islam . . . Since peace is the very nature of Allah (God), and peace He seeks for His people and peace is the nature of the righteous, most surely Islam is the religion of peace . . . to bring about a peace of mind and contentment after the destroyers of peace with falsehoods have been destroyed . . . Heaven is not a separate place somewhere; it is a condition and hell is a condition. I want you to remember these things. Remember that the Will of God now must be done, as Satan's will is up . . . God has come here to take you away from your enemies and sit you in a Heaven, not to carry you no place, but He wants to give you Heaven right here. You don't have to go off and die. No, stay alive and get into Heaven here. These are really ignorant teachings: to teach a man to die in order to go to a place that he can go while he lives . . . Both Heaven and Hell are in the same place. Everywhere is good until you make it evil or no good.<sup>27</sup>

**Examiner:** Gentlemen, let's move on to some other issues . . . Mr. Garvey, you plan to establish a Nation in Africa; will you discuss the enterprises you plan to set up to fund the building of a Nation in Africa?

**Garvey:** As a Negro, I would be untrue to myself and would be untrue to you, if I from my observation, fail to prepare the mind of the race for this titanic industrial and commercial struggle that is in the making . . . If we are to rise as a great [people] to become a great national force, we must start business enterprises of our own; we must build ships and start trading with ourselves between America, the West Indies and Africa. We must put up factories in all great manufacturing centers of this country, to give employment to the thousands of men and women who will be thrown out of work as soon as the nation takes on its normal attitude. In these factories we must manufacture boots, clothing and all necessities of life, those things that the people need, not

only our people in America, the West Indies and Africa, but the people of China, of India, of South and Central America, and even the white man. He has for hundreds of years made a market for his goods among Negroes and alien races; therefore, Negroes have the same right to make a market among white people for his manufactured goods.<sup>28</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, so is this the purpose of one of the auxiliary branches of the UNIA, the African Communities League, Inc.?

**Garvey:** The purposes for which it is to be formed are a.) To conduct grocery stores; to buy or otherwise acquire, to manufacture, market, prepare for market, sell, deal in and deal with, import and export food and food products of every class and description, fresh, canned or preserved, or otherwise, and all other food and other preparations. b.) In connection with the foregoing, to manufacture, market and prepare for market, buy, sell, deal in and deal with, import and export tin and any products of tin, glassware and any articles of glassware and any other article, receptacle, package or thing which may be useful in connection with the manufacture or marketing, vending or shipping of the products of the company or like products. c.) To carry on the business of restaurant keepers, caterers, tobacconists, dealers in provisions, wine and liquor dealers, and to manage and conduct restaurants and cafes in any part of the United States and in foreign countries. d.) To carry on the business of steam and general laundry and to wash, clean, purify, scour, bleach, wring, dry, iron, color, dye, disinfect, renovate and prepare for use all articles for wearing apparel, household, domestic and other linen and cotton and woolen goods and clothing and fabrics of all kinds . . . e.) To prepare for publication, print, electrotypes, bind, sell and distribute and generally deal in magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, books and publications of all kinds, and engage generally in the business of job and book printers, book-binders, stationers, engravers and electrotypes . . . f.) to manufacture and deal in clothing, haberdashery, boots, shoes, leather, leather goods and wearing apparel . . . g.) To manufacture and generally deal stoves, furnaces, ranges, gas and electric appliances and devices of all kinds for heating purposes . . . j.) To take, buy, purchase, exchange, hire, lease or otherwise acquire real estate and property, either improved or unimproved, and any interest or right therein.<sup>29</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Muhammad, what type of enterprises has the Nation of Islam sought for the Nation within a Nation?

**Muhammad:** Ownership of producing land is a prime and necessary part of freedom. A people cannot exist freely without land, and the so-called Negro in America is evidence of that fact. The slave master passed laws limiting the so-called Negro in land ownership or limiting the areas in which such purchases or even rental could be made . . . We are now farming in nearly every aspect of



life. We are farming and trying to grow meat, bread and everything else that we need to keep hunger and nakedness from taking hold of us . . . I have now made such trades with the nations, that I can assure you that if you follow me and do as I tell you to do, you will not hunger nor will you go naked . . . There's one thing I would like to say to you that we—we means my followers and self—are planning on many great things for the South Side of Chicago. This where the greatest number of us live. We have decided on making the South Side of Chicago a very beautiful place for us to live in. We have decided on building from 7800 block on Cottage Grove to 87<sup>th</sup> Street on the Eastside stores and warehouses. We're going to put in these stores merchandise of which the price will be unbelievable. So much less than what you have been paying the devil for. I was talking to a Pakistani merchant who came to my home a couple of days ago. He offers to sell us shoes, of which he had samples, and other merchandise at an unbelievable price. It was so low that you will have money to carry home to your wife. My idea is to send my people of ours, around to various people of our kind to order merchandise or wearing apparel from them . . . I'm going to order a few thousand shoes and a few thousand other necessary things that you do wear. I will pay for them myself if you don't want to buy them. I will pay for them and give them to you, to show you how you have been robbed, while calling yourselves Christians . . . We have country after country filled with Muslims and they have merchandise that we need to wear. Why should we waste our money with enemies, when our brothers will let us have it at a third of the price of what we are paying here now? . . . I'm ordering a few ship loads of good fish at a very reasonable price. You can eat them, and walk the streets with a full stomach of good fresh fish of the good type, then keep the other part of your money in your pocket. I can get these fish out of all waters of our Earth at any quantity that I want. We want to get started living inexpensively.<sup>30</sup>

**Examiner:** Gentleman, where do you plan to get the money to realize the Nations that you envision?

**Garvey:** The Five-Year Plan is a scheme of colossal magnitude. Should the amount budgeted for be fully subscribed, it would enable the organisation to, in a most practical and efficient manner, carry out, not only the industrial, commercial and other phases of the Convention program, but to a great extent encourage and carry out many of the major objects for racial development. The idea is to get every Negro in the world to pledge to contribute voluntarily a sum of money for five years and pay the same within five years to the Plan. The amount to be contributed is to be left entirely to the financial ability of the Individual person. It was suggested that no person could be so poor as not to, within five years, be able to contribute at least \$5.00 to such a fund to assist in the general development of the race. Hence, nobody should be left out, whilst the majority of people would be in a better position to contribute larger sums within the five years, according to their financial ability. As for instance, some

may be able to contribute for the five years \$10.00, \$20.00, \$100.00, \$500.00, \$1000.00, as the case might be . . . The method of contributing to the fund is as follows:--a person desirous of contributing makes a voluntary pledge for the amount to be contributed within five years, to be paid in instalments, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly or yearly, until paid, or according to circumstance pay the amount at one time. The pledge must be sent to the headquarters of the organisation . . . The person pledging must give his or her full name, correct address and profession. The person may send the first instalment with the pledge. On receipt of the first payment on the pledge, a pledge card is issued from headquarters to the subscriber or donor with the amount pledged written on the card and the amount paid also entered . . . After the pledge is fully paid up, a certificate is issued by the Parent Body to show that the particular person paid the pledge in contributing to the Five Year Plan of the organisation. At the close of the period for the Five Year Plan a record will be published in which each donor who has paid up to the pledge will have his or her name recorded for the information of all concerned. The amounts of money collected on the Plan will be appropriated for carrying out the many schemes.<sup>31</sup>

**Muhammad:** Borrowing money is very hard to do, especially from your enemies. They want to hold you down. You're going too fast for them anyway. Promises after promises have been made, but very little money has been materialized. As you heard about the Muslim countries loaning us around near three million dollars, that's true. They are promising us much more, it takes lots of money to build a nation. When you hear us telling of someone giving three or four million dollars or loaning us three or four million dollars, it's just like someone loaning you three or four dollars when you really needed a hundred dollars . . . We must sacrifice for three years. I will not ask you to try a five-year plan: I am afraid that you, with your short patience, will not agree. But try three years on an "Economic Savings Program" to fight against poverty among our people here in America . . . Send your quarters every week to Muhammad's Temple No. 2 in Chicago, Illinois. These quarters will be banked until we have a million dollars to begin building a banking system . . . As soon as we have enough money in our banks to purchase lands sufficient to feed the 22 million black people, we will build storage warehouses to store our supplies of the necessities of life for our people . . . You can send 25 cents each week or \$1 per month . . . Each and every one of you will be sent a receipt which will be recorded in our books for the Muslims' Three-Year Economic Program for the Black Nation in America . . . If we can save just five cents a day from our wages, 25 cents a week, \$1 dollar a month—that would mean \$13 a year we could save in a national savings bank. We number around 22 million and approximately five-million are wage-earners. If five million wage-earners saved \$13 a year, this would mean \$65 million saved out of our wages. At the rate of 25 cents per week, it would be painless. But the so-called Negroes do not have that in a national bank.<sup>32</sup>

**Examiner:** Now, Mr. Garvey and Mr. Muhammad, what group of people have been the biggest hindrances to the realization of a self-sustaining, independent, black nation in Africa or within the United States?

**Garvey:** In the fight to reach the top the oppressed have always been encumbered by the traitors of their own race, made up of those of little faith and those who are generally susceptible to bribery for the selling out of the rights of their own people. As Negroes, we are not entirely free of such an encumbrance. To be outspoken, I believe we are more encumbered in this way than any other race in the world, because of the lack of training and preparation for fitting us for our place in the world among nations and races. The traitor of other races is generally confined to the mediocre or irresponsible individual, but, unfortunately, the traitors among the Negro race are generally to be found among the men highest placed in education and society, the fellows who call themselves leaders.<sup>33</sup>

**Muhammad:** The so-called Negro leadership of America, this is where the blame should be put, in the political leadership, the church leadership—the preachers, who are just as frightened to say anything in defense of their people as a mouse is to come up in the daytime before hungry cats over the house. The Negro preachers are one of the worst enemies of their people. They're blind to the knowledge of self and hope to keep their followers blind for the enjoyment of the slave master's children. He is a tool. He is the chief ambassador, disciple, and apostle of the slave master's children, to his people. . . . The devil, blue-eyed white people, love to get around Reverend. They call him their man, you know, and Reverend calls himself their man. Reverend believes in that blue-eyed devil, because he calls him Reverend and pretends to be backing him up, but he's backing Reverend up into nothing but the fire of hell. Reverend, can not you see that he can't do nothing with me? He don't call me no Reverend. They can't stop me and I did not get a license from him to preach. When a man say that he's God's preacher and then has to be licensed by the world of his enemies, you have not yet become God's preacher. You're the devil's slave-making, white man's preacher . . . wants brotherhood with white America for himself and his followers . . . According to the Bible—he preaches from it—you should not make friends or have friendship with the wicked if you are the righteous, and you should not worship the devils . . . Most certainly, the white man is the devil—his own Bible teaches him that.<sup>34</sup>

**Examiner:** Gentlemen, your opponents and critics have labeled you both as black supremacists or racists. Some have contended that you want to foment a war among the

racess. Is force an option for either one of your organizations? Are you teaching a doctrine of black supremacy?

**Garvey:** I am not opposed to the white race as charged by my enemies. I have no time to hate any one. All my time is devoted to the up-building and development of the Negro Race . . . The powers opposed to Negro progress will not be influenced in the slightest by mere verbal protests on our part. They realize only too well that protests of this kind contain nothing but the breath expended in making them. They also realize that their success in enslaving and dominating the darker portion of humanity was due solely to the element of FORCE employed (in the majority of cases this was accomplished by force of arms). Pressure of course may assert itself in other forms, but in the last analysis whatever influence is brought to bear against the powers opposed to Negro progress must contain the element of FORCE in order to accomplish its purpose, since it is apparent that this is the only element they recognize . . . I pray God that we shall never use our physical prowess to oppress the human race, but we will use our strength, physically, morally and otherwise to preserve humanity and civilization.<sup>35</sup>

**Muhammad:** Allah has revealed that the black is the original Man, and that's what I teach. Now, where this supremacy teaching comes in that is charged by the disbelievers—that I teach it in order to suit their particular purpose of charging us with being an aggressive movement, or intending to become such, because of the teachings of one being superior over the other. We say that the black man is the first man in the sun, and then, they take this and just change it around—that he is teaching supremacy. And that we are not doing . . . We are not going to take part in any violence whatsoever. We're not going to do anything other than what we are doing. That is trying to deliver the truth to our people and teach them that they are supposed to be Muslims, and that means that they are supposed to be righteous people and that we have shed all things that pertain to wickedness. We have stripped ourselves of our arms to let you know that we are not people of violence. We don't intend to attack you. We have no idea or knowledge of anything like that coming in the future. Because if we attacked you, we would have to have superior weapons to attack you with, and we don't have factories nor earth to dig metals to manufacture tools or weapons such as you have.<sup>36</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Garvey, what are your views on racial purity?

**Garvey:** I believe in a pure black race just as how all self-respecting whites believe in a pure white race, as far as that can be. I am conscious of the fact that slavery brought upon us the curse of many colors within the Negro race, but that is no reason why we ourselves should perpetuate the evil; hence instead of encouraging a wholesale bastardy in the race, we feel that we should now set out to create a race type and standard of our own which could not, in

the future, be stigmatized by bastardy, but could be recognized and respected as the true race type anteceding even our own time.<sup>37</sup>

**Examiner:** Mr. Muhammad, what are your views on intermarriage?

**Muhammad:** The greatest and foremost desire of all my mentally dead people is their wish to intermarry with the very children of the merciless slave-master who slaughtered our fathers and mothers in such ways that we today are still being paid from their service. We have before our eyes today a very plain picture of the actions of our people in trying to merge or absorb themselves into the slave-master's blood and flesh. This is one of the most ugly, most shameful, and most ignorant action on the part of the so-called American Negroes: to integrate. This foolish and ignorant idea of intermarrying with their once slave-master and their open enemy, who are fighting against them even becoming a free person, a free human being in the world of human beings. This is very shameful indeed. How can a slave who is subjected to the evils of his masters, kicked, beaten, shot down at will, lynched, called all kinds of evil and ugly names now want in return to make love with such people and even want them to marry them and take them for members of their society and members of their family? Whoever heard of such ignorant people? It does not look proper for the intelligent of the so-called Negroes, lost and found members of the black nation, to intermix with the very people who destroyed the morals and the knowledge of their fathers and mothers for 400 long years, and who subjected them to all kinds of evils and filth to the extent that today no nation wants them as their equal. There is no nation who wants us in such an ignorant state and condition, to be in their society or in their country among them, unless we become Muslims.<sup>38</sup>

**Garvey:** For a rich Negro to marry a poor white is an unpardonable crime and sin because it simply means the transference of the wealth of the race to another, and the ultimate loss of that wealth to that race. It is logically evident that if the Negro is rich, he gained all or most of his wealth from his race. To ignore, therefore, the opposite sex of his race and intermarry with another race is to commit this crime or this sin for which he should never be pardoned by his race. Teach the people to abhor such Negroes, and have nothing to do with them so long as they continue in that relationship . . . For a Negro man to marry someone who does not look like his mother or not a member of his race is to insult his mother, insult nature and insult God who made his father. The best tribute a race can pay to nature and God is to preserve its species and when it does otherwise, it is in rebellion . . . Insist in a campaign of race purity, that is doing everything moral and social within the race and close ranks against all other races. It is natural that it is a disgrace to mix your race with other races. The splitting up of the race is unwholesome and doesn't tend to dignify morally the group. It will be a beautiful thing when we have a standard Negro race. In preaching race purity, be very careful because it is a delicate subject, in that most of the people are of ignorant of this idealism. You must

never put colour within the race against colour, you must never insult any colour within the race. Whatsoever has happened in the past was without our consent . . . now that we know better, it is for us to adjust these things within our own race.<sup>39</sup>

**Muhammad:** My young brothers, do not grab these blue-eyed girls of his. They are doing this today to get you away from the God of your salvation. The girl has been taught a long time, so when this day came, she would sweetheart with you and blind you to the knowledge of the time, so you won't recognize what she's doing. She will make you think that we just now realized that we have to live as one people, and you yet blind, will say, "yes, yes, that's right;" but no, understand what she means: that the time have arrived now that I will make you to think that I'm in love with you. I will marry you, you will marry me, but you are headed for hell. I will try enticing you, work on the very nature of you. I will go nude in front of you—think over that. He gives them the woman, corrupting themselves, that's there in your Bible.<sup>40</sup>

**Examiner:** Gentlemen, we are just about out of time. We have enough time for some final comments from both of you. Mr. Garvey . . .

**Garvey:** Ambition, reasonable ambition, is the making of the man and the making of the race. The individual or the nation that has no ambition has no true destiny. It is a positive fact that the majority of Negroes to-day lack ambition . . . There are more than two hundred million Negroes in Africa with a continent that is large and resourceful. Let him build there, let him build his own nations, let him build his own civilization, let him show the world a duplicate in Africa of what exists in Europe . . . It is not what the other fellow will give you—you must take; it is what you want that you must have. The white man has no more right of interfering with the black man's progress than the black man has to interfere with the white man. Nature or God made black and white free human agents and as such they have a right to the possession of all that nature gives, and when one man interferes with the rights of another and that other submits, he is a coward, he is a fool, and God, Nature and all men must be against him . . . after we are properly educated to the realization of the truth. When that day comes, Africa will stretch out her hands and her children will rush to her arms as to the arms of a loving mother. Indeed, then, "Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God." . . . the standard Negro is the African and all Negroes should be proud of their black blood without insulting any colour within the race . . . The idea of the UNIA is to unite into one race all the grades of colour and build up a standard race.<sup>41</sup>

**Muhammad:** I am here against the will of the enemy who calls his religion Christianity, and against you who believe in it. I'm here against both he and his followers . . . A Reverend who preaches Christianity is the false prophet,



which the Bible is referring to, who went down with his name. You love to be called Reverend Jackson, Reverend Jones. You don't know that you are being called after the devil's names . . . As long as you are in the name of the white slave-master, you belong to the white slave-master. And regardless to what you believe and regardless to how mighty you think that you are, you will not be accepted by the Black people and the God of our Black people if you have the name of white people and if you are in the religion called Christianity . . . you loved talking about going to Africa to preach the devil's Christianity . . . I have traveled a little in Africa myself and also in Asia . . . I have been visited by man Africans, many of them right here in my home in Chicago. They come to me. They are happy to meet me and I'm happy to meet them. There are many fine scholars and scientists in Africa, but in all of their knowledge that they have, it is not from the right source, the white man has taught them. They have some of their ancient teachings, but now it must be replaced for the new wisdom, knowledge and understanding that is brought forth to liberate the black man all over the earth. . . . We use to call ourselves a race. Since the teachings and coming of God, the Best Knower, He has blessed us to understand that we are not a race of people, but a nation. A race is something having a beginning and an ending, but a nation is something that is standard. Something which time sets up posts to go between is not a nation. A nation cannot be measured by a mile post, but a race can, and this is why we call the white man a race, because they are racing with time to get to another post, and when he gets to the last post, the 6<sup>th</sup> post declares his time. The last post, number 6, is the end. There is no other post for him to reach for . . . My job is not to argue with you. No, because I know I have the key. You argue, yet, you can't get out unless I let you out. Take it or let it alone!<sup>42</sup>

**Examiner:** Unfortunately, we are out of time. Station A. K. I. L. thanks its guests, the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, for sharing their respective theologies and ideologies, regarding the advancement of black people, with us. Anyone who heard this dialogue or anyone who reads the transcripts will understand both men better as a result of this exchange. Thank you to the listening audience for their support of the station. If the opportunity presents itself again, we will allow the audience to call in with questions. Until then, peace, from station A. K. I. L.

## Notes

## Chapter V

<sup>1</sup> Many quotations from Garvey and Muhammad contain errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. For this thesis, the researcher chose to leave the errors as they are because they are applicable to the Chapter VI analysis of Garvey and Muhammad. Also, Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* recommends against filling a paper with [sic].

<sup>2</sup> Hill and Bair, *Marcus Garvey Life and Lessons*, 35-36.

<sup>3</sup> Hakim, *The True History of Elijah Muhammad*, 35-37.

<sup>4</sup> Hill, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers*, 1:62.

<sup>5</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman In America* (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1965), 161-62.

<sup>6</sup> Hill and Bair, 221.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman*, 2, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Amy Jacques Garvey, ed., *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 44.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman*, 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Hill and Bair, 225-26.

<sup>11</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *The History of Jesus' Birth, Death, and What It Means* (Atlanta: Secretarius Mempis Publication, 1993), 32-33.

<sup>12</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *The True History of Jesus* (Chicago: Coalition for the Remembrance of Elijah, 1992), 1-2, 16, 18.

<sup>13</sup> Hill and Bair, 228-29, 231.

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman*, 1, 3-4.

<sup>15</sup> Hill and Bair, 228-29.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman*, 6, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad, *The True History of Master Fard Muhammad*, 50-51.

<sup>18</sup> Hill and Bair, 260.

<sup>19</sup> Hill and Bair, 269, 275; Garvey, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *The Theology of Time* (Atlanta: Secretarius M.E.M.P.S., 1997), 4-5, 13, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *Our Savior Has Arrived* (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, 1974), 96-99.

<sup>22</sup> Hill and Bair, 279.



- 
- <sup>23</sup> Hill and Bair, 226-27, 231.
- <sup>24</sup> Muhammad, *Our Savior Has Arrived*, 147, 152-54; *The Theology of Time*, 249-50.
- <sup>25</sup> Muhammad, *The Theology of Time*, 96 289; *Our Savior Has Arrived*, 39-40.
- <sup>26</sup> Garvey, 3, 9, 27.
- <sup>27</sup> Muhammad, *The Theology of Time*, 34-36, 57, 71, 214, 335; *Our Savior Has Arrived*, 155; *Message To The Blackman*, 68, 234.
- <sup>28</sup> Hill, 1:351-52.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid, 248-50.
- <sup>30</sup> Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman*, 37; *The Theology of Time*, 191-92, 237.
- <sup>31</sup> Hill and Bair, 340-42.
- <sup>32</sup> Muhammad, *The Theology of Time*, 192; *Message To The Blackman*, 193.
- <sup>33</sup> Garvey, 29.
- <sup>34</sup> Hakim, 103-04; Muhammad, *The Theology of Time*, 261; *Message To The Blackman*, 241.
- <sup>35</sup> Garvey, 11, 13, 16.
- <sup>36</sup> Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman*, 315, 317-18.
- <sup>37</sup> Garvey, 37.
- <sup>38</sup> Hakim, 85-86.
- <sup>39</sup> Hill and Bair, 203-04.
- <sup>40</sup> Muhammad, *The Theology of Time*, 24.
- <sup>41</sup> Hill and Bair, 151-52, 202.
- <sup>42</sup> Muhammad, *The Theology of Time*, 110-11, 201, 337-38, 343; Elijah Muhammad, *The Fall of America* (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, 1973), 144.

## CHAPTER VI

### A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GARVEY AND MUHAMMAD

White people have spent their entire existence trying to make us look up to them, idolize them, be like them. Therefore, when a Black Man stood up to teach Black, they charged him with teaching Black Supremacy. Black Supremacy was supposed to be something evil. Supremacy means to top, to be the Supreme Ruler. Somebody has to be supreme, white folks. You've been supreme for 6,000 years. What's wrong with Black Supremacy? It's our day now! And some foolish brother will say, "It's just as bad . . . Black Supremacy is just as bad as white supremacy." How would you know? You never lived under Black rule! But your day is coming. And if you don't want to live under Black rule, you might as well get off the planet, because that's where it's going!

The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan

This critical analysis focuses on some of the differences between the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. In their responses to the question about their backgrounds, the most apparent difference relates to the education of both men. In St. Ann's Bay, Garvey managed to attain the equivalent of a high school education; then, he furthered his education at Birkbeck College in London. This education, nevertheless, inculcated him with European values, and although he viewed the world through the lens of Africa, his mindset resembled that of a European because of his education. Every subject that Marcus Garvey studied suggested that the European standard represented the highest standard. Therefore, his philosophy on African nationalism exudes the idea that black people should imitate Europeans in the establishment of black institutions in order to gain respect among people. Garvey's

education allowed him to cling to Christian ethics and dogma, and one of the expressed goals of the UNIA was to civilize Africa with Christianity. In other words, Garvey wanted to emulate white missionaries by establishing a Nation grounded upon the religion of the colonizers.

Garvey's strength lay in his understanding of rhetoric and the use of rhetorical devices. Since he learned standard, written English early, Garvey maintained a distinct advantage over the masses of black people in America who, for the most part, remained illiterate during the height of the UNIA. The masses of black people wanted a leader, thus Garvey supplied what the people demanded. Garvey's main detractors, who had been indoctrinated with the same European values as Garvey, opposed Garvey because he threatened their positions as educational leaders. Garvey challenged such leaders to think in terms of a black nation, instead of attempting to assimilate within the white nation of America. Garvey's education allowed him to comprehend the actions of and the direction in which the black intelligentsia wanted to steer the masses of black people.

In contrast, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's lack of formal education placed him in the position to reject European standards. Muhammad received his education from one person, Master Fard Muhammad. Master Fard Muhammad taught Elijah how to read and understand the English language. Master Fard Muhammad taught Elijah mathematics; Master Fard Muhammad taught Elijah history beyond what any textbooks in America contained. Most importantly, Master Fard Muhammad taught Elijah Islam, which automatically placed Elijah Muhammad in a position of opposition to the values of American society. Accordingly, Elijah Muhammad had to contend with a trilateral force in the United States, as opposed to Garvey contending with a bilateral force. Whereas

Garvey struggled against white and Negro forces, Muhammad squabbled with Christian, white, and so-called Negro forces. In order to succeed, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had to follow the instructions of one man, Master Fard Muhammad.

One cannot emphasize enough that the person of Master Fard Muhammad equipped Elijah to mentally tangle with the most intelligent and Christian people among black people and the most Christian and intelligent people among white people. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad evolved in his own understanding of what Master Fard Muhammad taught him, although he never changed the teachings. Since he received his knowledge from Master Fard Muhammad and since he placed his confidence in what Master Fard Muhammad taught him, Elijah rejected all other scholars, theologians, and scientists who contradicted what Master Fard Muhammad taught him. In the final analysis, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's lack of formal education proved to be what afforded him the success that he experienced as a leader. Also, in the final analysis, Elijah Muhammad's lack of formal education permitted Master Fard Muhammad to form and shape Elijah's mind into a mind like that of Master Fard Muhammad, which opposed wickedness and praised righteousness. Garvey's education prepared him to accept European standards, whereas Muhammad's education prepared him to reject European standards.

According to the dialogue, Garvey wanted to establish a universal confraternity promoting Christian worship with Africa at the center. Muhammad wanted to establish a separate territory within the United States with God at the center. Although Garvey based the UNIA out of New York, he envisioned the relocation of this base to Africa.<sup>1</sup> Once the organization centralized itself in Liberia, undoubtedly, the next move for

Garvey and the UNIA's African Legions was to eliminate the colonial powers in that region. In the opinion of this researcher, Garvey underestimated the immensity of his own goals and plans. Garvey attempted to accomplish his plans much too hastily, especially, in the context of early, twentieth century world politics. The lack of munitions, the lack of education among the masses of black people, and the lack of understanding with respect to global affairs stifled the realization of a black nation in Africa.

On the other hand, by leading an organization based upon non-aggression, Elijah Muhammad ensured that the NOI succeeded. Under the leadership of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam exerted its right to educate its children. Once the Nation of Islam seized this single element—education—and focused upon it, the Nation of Islam guaranteed its prosperity and future growth. Under Garvey, the UNIA sent their children to schools with Eurocentric values, although Garvey expected his followers to teach their children African history at home. Undoubtedly, Garvey overestimated the masses of black people's knowledge of history. The majority of black people in the United States only learned what white folks wanted them to know during the era of the Honorable Marcus Garvey. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, as one born in the United States, fully comprehended the dynamics of the social milieu in which so-called Negroes dwelled. This fact enhanced the probability of success for Muhammad and the Nation of Islam.

The dialogue attempted to accentuate the two leaders' beliefs concerning God because this subject has driven the black experience in America. Theology existed at the root of the Nation of Islam, while religion existed on the periphery of the Universal

Negro Improvement Association. On one hand, the centrality and importance of a specific theology ensured that the Nation of Islam endured the test of time. On the other hand, Garvey's tolerance of all religions, but subscription to the religion of Christianity, created an environment conducive to confusion and conflict. If Garvey were "the Moses" of black people, then his success depended upon God as Moses depended upon God. Instead, Garvey placed God and religion on the margins of the UNIA, and this researcher maintains that relegating God to a secondary or tertiary position influenced the demise of the UNIA.

In contrast, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad placed theology and God at the center of his entire agenda. Not only did Muhammad place one's understanding of God at the center of the Nation of Islam's program, but also, he challenged the belief in a mysterious, unknown God, which most black people in the United States accepted. For the followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Islam became their *raison d'être*. Islam compelled the followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to shun the life of this world (i.e., sport and play) and to strive for an ascetic livelihood.

In the dialogue, Garvey placed no limitations on his business ventures, for Garvey wanted to sell tobacco, liquor, and all food types. Elijah Muhammad, though, only engaged in trade for goods that he deemed necessary for the extension of his followers' lives. In other words, Garvey's business dealings perpetuated the excesses of the masses of people in order to generate funds to finance a Nation in Africa. Muhammad, however, eliminated the excesses, thereby causing his followers to have a surplus of money, which, when pooled, allowed the Nation of Islam to purchase land or open various businesses

within the United States. The Nation of Islam practiced frugality in spending, while the Universal Negro Improvement Association sometimes spent money frivolously.

Also in the dialogue, the primary clash was between Christianity and Islam, and if these two men had met, they certainly would have differed on these ideas. If Garvey and Muhammad had not differed, perhaps Muhammad would have convinced Garvey to accept the Muslim Program. Perhaps readers discerned the weaknesses in the Christian dogma of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's retorts exposed such weaknesses. Because of the limitations of Christianity, Elijah Muhammad urged his followers to look at the world in which they lived and to use science to understand events pertaining to life.

For example, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught that the Original Designer of the Universe was self-created from a single atom of life. An example of self-creation exists in several species of spores which reproduce asexually. Indeed the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad agree with the science of genetics. Muhammad taught that blond-haired, blue-eyed white people are devils and that they came from black people. In fact, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught that a black man, Yacub, grafted the first white people from black people on the island of Pelan over 6,000 years ago. First, Yacub isolated his black followers on this tiny island in the Aegean Sea. Then, Yacub began a specialized form of birth control which eliminated the dark-skinned offspring and spared the lighter-skinned offspring. Yacub's followers completed the process of grafting after six hundred years, and the result of the experiment was a race of white people.<sup>2</sup> Many who hear this story refer to it as a myth, yet when critically analyzed, this "myth"

contains the truth concerning the origins of white people (i.e., they came from black people).

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught that no life exists beyond the grave, and he taught that no God or Man lives forever. Only through God's wisdom, in the person of man, does God perpetuate His existence. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught that the universe was created on time, and that even this universe, as man and mankind understands it, has a designated time to end. When properly understood, the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad force a person of the Black Nation to examine herself/himself in order to know who God is. Similarly, the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad force a person outside of the Black Nation, namely, blond-haired, blue-eyed white people, to examine themselves to know who Satan is.

In the dialogue, the Honorable Marcus Garvey referred to black people as a race; Garvey believed that God was divisible by three and each division was equal; Garvey accepted the name "Negro" as an accurate designation for black people, although white people coined the word. This researcher attributes Garvey's acceptance of European standards to his "mis-education" and Muhammad's longevity to the Man who educated Elijah about "HimSelf." After Elijah Muhammad "Self-educated" his followers, many defected, including some from his own family. As the heir to his father's Nation of Islam, Wallace Muhammad, eventually changed the course of the movement by proclaiming that Master Fard Muhammad was not God in person and by allowing "devils" to join the movement. Instead, Wallace insisted that Master Fard Muhammad was merely a wise man. Wallace Muhammad's criticism of the Honorable Elijah



Muhammad's teachings caused some people to believe that weaknesses existed in the theology of the Nation of Islam.

For instance, in his 1980 book, *As The Light Shineth From The East*, Wallace dwelled on the issue of Master Fard Muhammad being a mulatto. Master Fard Muhammad's mother was white, blond-haired and blue-eyed, according to the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Master Fard Muhammad's father, Alphonso Shabazz was a pure, black man. Alphonso chose a white woman and converted her to Islam in order to produce a child who was able to pass as white. According to the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, this child had to be near white in order to gain entrance into certain societies that were closed to black people. According to the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Master Fard Muhammad had to be of both worlds (i.e., black and white) in order to judge fairly between the two worlds. Alphonso Shabazz was a black man and was the one responsible for passing down knowledge of the two worlds to Master Fard Muhammad, who belonged to the Black Nation.<sup>3</sup>

After the Honorable Elijah Muhammad "departed," his son used the history of Master Fard Muhammad to discourage followers and to cause them to become apostates to what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught. After converting to "orthodox Islam," the former believers reverted to a belief in an unknown, mysterious Allah, who replaced the mysterious Jesus in whom they once believed. The belief in God as man and man as God differentiated the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam from orthodox Islam. Another issue that Wallace Muhammad drew attention to in his book, as a weakness in his father's teachings, was the story of Yacub's creation of the white race. Wallace mocked his father by saying that grafting means to bind together, although his

father taught that it meant separating.<sup>4</sup> Surely, science proves that in order to graft a species, one must first extract in order to bind. This extraction entails a separation.

Yacub had to extract a black germ in order to study it! From the black germ, he extracted a brown germ. From the brown germ, he extracted a yellow germ; then, from the yellow germ he extracted a white germ.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Wallace renounced his father's teachings, which insisted that white people are devils. In his book, Wallace attempted to argue that the environment caused variations among species; therefore, the environment was responsible for the actions and appearances of white people.<sup>6</sup> Again, this argument contains only a fragment of the truth. Anthropologists know that the primary factors causing variation among species are genes. The environment is the secondary factor causing variation among species, thus Wallace's attempt to discredit his father by questioning his understanding of science appears to fall short of its intended aim.

Being part of the Black Nation simply means being able to produce melanin in the epidermal layer of the skin and in certain internal regions of the body. For this reason, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad excluded white-skinned, blue-eyed, and blond-haired people from the Black Nation. Experts in physiology know that all people produce melanin internally, yet some people lack the "genetic capacity" to produce externally visible melanin, as well as melanin in specific, internal regions of the body.<sup>7</sup> If one needed proof of this science, one only needs to observe a white-skinned, blue-eyed, and blond-haired person sit in the sun for an hour everyday. The person does not tan, as a brown-eyed, brown-haired white person—with tanning lotion—may tan. The lack of "genetic capacity" to produce surface melanin means that this blond-haired, blue-eyed

white person burns until the skin blisters. If the environment alone caused variation, then white people would not remain white when transferred for generations to a climate with natives of color.

Now, the Honorable Marcus Garvey never concerned himself with science or mathematics. Garvey's strength, as stated, rested upon his understanding of rhetoric. Garvey succeeded because he understood what black people wanted to hear; Garvey succeeded because he comprehended what black people wanted to see—thus the red, black, and green flags and the parades. If one critically analyzed the legacy of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, one would look beyond the veneer of the red, black, and green flag. Garvey spoke about Africa for the Africans, but not once did Garvey set foot on the continent.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Garvey trusted his own people too much, especially, the so-called Negroes in the United States; Garvey's lack of control over the administrative responsibilities of the UNIA contributed to the decline of the organization. Garvey's grandiose idealism translated into a scheme much larger than he ever imagined, but he made an admirable effort. Garvey gave an example, and as long as black people have an example, they must never stop until they realize its standard, revise it, or replace it.

Elijah Muhammad, on the other hand, visited Africa, and his visits caused him to realize the opportunity that black people have in the United States. Although Muhammad understood world affairs, his main concern centered upon the plight of the so-called Negroes in America. Unlike Garvey, Muhammad placed very little control of the Nation of Islam's affairs in the hands of any one person. No matter how powerful a spokesman for the Nation of Islam appeared to the public, the spokesman merely followed the orders of Elijah Muhammad. Master Fard Muhammad's founding of the Nation of Islam, upon

a program of intolerance with respect to ideology, empowered the Supreme Minister whom he appointed in 1931. Elijah Muhammad's intolerance of external philosophies forced him to ostracize people within his immediate family, as early as 1935. Elijah Muhammad, as the supreme leader of the NOI, never allowed the administration of the Nation to rest upon the shoulders of any person, except for his wife during his period of incarceration. Undoubtedly, the firm commitment to the principles of dualism, as taught by Master Fard Muhammad and reinforced by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, caused the Nation of Islam to prosper after 1947.

In summary, this thesis dealt with the subjects of the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, focusing upon their concepts of black nationalism, God, and racial purity. On the one hand, the thesis characterized the UNIA as an economic form of black nationalism. On the other hand, this thesis identified the Nation of Islam as a religious form of black nationalism. This researcher's primary purpose for writing this thesis, besides academic requirements, however, centered upon the origins of the Nation of Islam. This thesis did not theorize concerning the origins of the NOI, but rather, it presented documented information available to the public on the Nation of Islam. Many scholars and historians have attempted to shroud the person of Master Fard Muhammad in mystery, thus making him unknowable. This thesis used the substantiated history of the Nation of Islam to remove the veil of mysticism attributed to Master Fard Muhammad.

In Chapter One, the thesis mentioned some of the pioneers of the nationalist tradition, which has existed since slavers shipped black people to the shores of America. Chapter One also raised certain questions concerning the origins of the Nation of Islam,

primarily, because some historians and scholars have labeled the Nation of Islam as an “offshoot” of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. As contended, in order for this statement to be true, one has to prove that Master Fard Muhammad was a follower of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, which has not been done. Consequently, Chapter Two, “The Facts Versus The Theories,” examined some of the literature on black nationalism, the Moorish Science Temple of America, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and the Nation of Islam. This chapter detailed how some historians and scholars created a link between the Nation of Islam and the Universal Negro Improvement Association via Noble Drew Ali’s Moorish Science Temple of America. Such historians invented the link during the period between 1938 and 1960, although the same scholars failed to document their claims.

Then, the chapter exhibited how scholars, from 1961-1965, further embellished the theories which developed between 1938 and 1960. During this period, 1961-1965, certain scholars and historians began to directly connect the Nation of Islam to the Universal Negro Improvement Association through the UNIA’s Rabbi Arnold J. Ford, a black Jew from Harlem. This researcher contended that these theories abetted the federal government’s slander campaign against the Nation of Islam, which first began in 1959 and peaked between 1964 and 1965. In that campaign against the Nation of Islam, the federal government attempted to characterize Master Fard Muhammad as a narcotics abuser, user, and seller, who had been arrested and incarcerated at San Quentin Prison under the name of Wallace Dodd Ford. After 1965, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad began to publish his own books in order to fend off his detractors, critics, traitors, or enemies.

Also, Chapter Two discussed some of the studies on the Honorable Marcus Garvey, which became prevalent after 1970, to display how these studies misrepresented the origins of the Nation of Islam and the organizational affiliations of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Between 1970 and 1975, studies shifted to the phenomenon of “Black Power,” and these same studies compartmentalized all black nationalist movements under the heading of “Black Power.” These same studies crowned the Honorable Marcus Garvey as the father of the black nationalist trend in the twentieth century. Chapter Two mentioned how studies reverted to the Nation of Islam in order to scrutinize the NOI’s transformation from the Nation of Islam to the World Community of Islam in the West, under the leadership of Wallace D. Muhammad. Finally, this chapter demonstrated how the most recent scholarship continues to perpetuate the theories concerning the person of Master Fard Muhammad, his founding of the Nation of Islam, and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s alleged ties to the UNIA.

In Chapter Three, after a brief overview of the Honorable Marcus Garvey’s background, the thesis concentrated on the inception of the UNIA, the specific conditions which contributed to the UNIA’s demise within the United States, and the conditions which led to Garvey’s deportation in 1927. Chapter Three pinpointed the period between 1918 and 1919 as the crucial period when the Universal Negro Improvement Association began to falter, in this researcher’s opinion, because of administrative negligence on the part of its leadership. In Chapter Four, after a brief overview of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s background, the thesis discussed the history of the Nation of Islam, utilizing the documented information available. This chapter mentioned the early struggles of the organization under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad and demonstrated

the persecution that Elijah Muhammad suffered because Master Fard Muhammad appointed him as Supreme Minister.

In Chapter Five, this researcher created a hypothetical dialogue between the Honorable Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad in order to accentuate some differences in their respective theologies and to illustrate some differences in their economic programs. This chapter also allowed both leaders to answer the claims of their critics, who depicted them as black supremacists and/or racists. Chapter Six critically analyzed some of the weaknesses in the program of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, discussed how the theology of Elijah Muhammad taught man to study science in order to understand what knowledge was verifiable—thus true. Chapter Six also pointed to the main weaknesses that the son of Elijah Muhammad, Wallace Muhammad, perceived in the theology of the Nation of Islam.

Ultimately, the ideas of Garvey and Muhammad will continue to influence the minds of black people throughout the diaspora. In 1977, the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan split from Wallace D. Muhammad and began rebuilding the Nation of Islam based upon the original teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, ensuring that Elijah Muhammad's teachings remain alive not only in the United States but around the entire globe. Also, in many cities across the United States, people still celebrate the legacy of the Honorable Marcus Garvey, for the red, black, and green flag has become a permanent fixture among those people with black nationalist aspirations.

---

Notes

---

## Chapter VI

<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Hill, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers*, 2:202.

<sup>2</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman*, 109-22.

<sup>3</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *The True History of Master Fard Muhammad*, 9, 19.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace D. Muhammad, *As The Light Shineth From The East* (Chicago: WDM Publishing Co., 1980), 208.

<sup>5</sup> Elijah Muhammad, *Message To The Blackman*, 115-16.

<sup>6</sup> Wallace Muhammad, 158-70.

<sup>7</sup> T. Owens Moore, *The Science of Melanin: Dispelling The Myths* (Silver Springs, MD: Beckham House Publishers, Inc., 1995), 41-57.

<sup>8</sup> Edmund D. Cronon, *Black Moses* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955), 1.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alford, Terry. *Prince Among Slaves*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Allen, Gary. *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*. Cutchogue, N.Y.: Buccaneer Books, Inc., 1976.
- Banks, William H. *The Black Muslims*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1997.
- ben-Jochannan, Yosef. *A Chronology of the Bible*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1995.
- Beynon, Erdmann Doane. "The Voodoo Cult Among Negro Migrants in Detroit." *American Journal of Sociology* 43.6 (May 1938): 894-907.
- Blyden, Edward W. *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1994.
- Bontemps, Arna and Jack Conroy. *They Seek A City*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945.
- Brotz, Howard. *The Black Jews of Harlem*. 1964. Reprint. New York: Schocken Books, 1970.
- Browder, Anthony T. *Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Karmic Guidance, 1992.
- Burkett, Randall K. *Garveyism as a Religious Movement: The Institutionalization of a Black Civil Religion*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1978.
- Butler, Alfred. *The Arab Invasion of Egypt and the Last 30 Years of the Roman Dominion*. Brooklyn: A & B Publishing Group, 1992.
- Cameron, James. *A Time of Terror*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1982.
- Carmichael, Stokely and Charles Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. New York: Random House, 1967.
- Clarke, John Henrik, ed. *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*. New York: Vintage Books, 1970.

- Clegg, Claude Andrew, III. *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Cone, James H. *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991.
- Cronon, Edmund D. *Black Moses*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. *Civilization Or Barbarism*. Brooklyn: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991.
- Draper, Theodore. *The Rediscovery of Black Nationalism*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1970.
- El-Amin, Mustafa. *The Religion of Islam and the Nation of Islam: What Is the Difference?* Newark: El-Amin Productions, 1991.
- Essien-Udom, E. U. *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Farrakhan, Louis. *7 Speeches*. Chicago: FCN Publishing Co., 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Torchlight for America*. Chicago: FCN Publishing Co., 1993.
- Fauset, Arthur H. *Black Gods of the Metropolis*. 1944. Reprint. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Moorish Science Temple of America*. New Lisbon: Universal Research Associates, 1994.
- Franklin, John H. and Alfred A. Moss. *From Slavery to Freedom*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994.
- Frazier, E. Franklin. *The Negro Church in America*. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.
- Gardell, Mattias. *In The Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan And The Nation of Islam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Garvey, Amy Jacques, ed. *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. New York: Arno Press, 1969.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Guthrie, Paul Lawrence. *Making of the Whiteman*. New York: Beacon Communications, n.d.

- Hakim, Nasir Makr, ed. *The True History of Elijah Muhammad*. Atlanta: M.E.M.P.S., 1997.
- Haley, Alex, ed. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.
- Hall, Raymond L. *Black Separatism In The United States*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1978.
- Harding, Vincent. *There Is A River*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1981.
- Hawkins, Hugh, ed. *Booker T. Washington and His Critics: Black Leadership in Crisis*. Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1974.
- Hill, Robert A., ed. *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*. Vol. 1. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- Hill, Robert A. and Barbara Bair, eds. *Marcus Garvey: Life and Lessons*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Howard, Clark. *Zebra*. New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1979.
- Islam, True. *How Came the Black God, Mr. Muhammad?* Vol. 1. Atlanta: All in All Publishing, 1997.
- Kedourie, Elie. *Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1993.
- Knight, Fahim A. *In Defense of the Defender: The Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad*. Durham: Fahim and Associates, 1994.
- Lee, Martha E. *The Nation of Islam: An American Millenarian Movement*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellon Press, 1988.
- Lincoln, C. Eric. *The Black Muslims in America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Black Church Since Frazier*. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.
- Lomax, Louis E. *The Negro Revolt*. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *When The Word Is Given*. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1963.
- Magida, Arthur J. *Prophet of Rage: A Life of Louis Farrakhan and His Nation*. New York: Basic Books, 1996.

Malcion, Jose V. *How The Hebrews Became Jews*. New York: U. B. Productions, 1978.

Marsh, Clifton E. *From Black Muslims to Muslims: The Transition from Separatism to Islam, 1930-1980*. Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1984.

Martin, Tony. *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*. Dover: Majority Press, 1976.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Marcus Garvey, Hero*. Dover: Majority Press, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Poetical Works of Marcus Garvey*. Dover: Majority Press, 1983.

Moore, T. Owens. *The Science of Melanin: Dispelling The Myths*. Silver Spring, MD: Beckham House Publishers, Inc., 1995

Moses, Wilson Jeremiah. *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Classical Black Nationalism from the American Revolution to Marcus Garvey*. New York: New York University Press, 1996.

Muhammad, Elijah. *The Supreme Wisdom*. Vol. 1. Newport News: National Newport News and Commentator, 1957.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Supreme Wisdom*. Vol. 2. Hampton: U.B. & U.S. Communications Systems, n.d.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Elijah Muhammad Meets The Press*. Atlanta: M.E.M.P.S., n.d.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Message To The Blackman in America*. Chicago: The Final Call Inc., 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. *How to Eat to Live*. Vol. 1. Chicago: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. *How to Eat to Live*. Vol. 2. Chicago: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, 1972.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Fall of America*. Chicago: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Our Saviour Has Arrived*. Chicago: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Flag of Islam*. Chicago: Elijah Muhammad, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The True History of Jesus*. Chicago: C.R.O.E., 1992.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Christianity vs. Islam*. Atlanta: M.E.M.P.S. Publication Co., 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The History of Jesus' Birth, Death And What It Means*. Atlanta: Secretarius Memp's Publication, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Mother Plane*. Atlanta: Secretarius Memp's Publication, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *History of the Nation of Islam*. Atlanta: Secretarius Memp's Publication, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The True History of Master Fard Muhammad*. Atlanta: M.E.M.P.S., 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Theology of Time*. Atlanta: M.E.M.P.S., 1997.
- Muhammad, Jabril. *This Is The One*. Phoenix: Jabril Muhammad, 1993.
- Muhammad, Silis. *The Wake Of The Nation Of Islam*. College Park: Silis Muhammad, 1985.
- Muhammad, Tynnetta. *The Comer By Night 1986*. Chicago: Honorable Elijah Muhammad Educational Foundation, Inc., 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Women in Islam Educational Series*. Pt. 1. Chicago: The Final Call Inc., 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Women in Islam Educational Series*. Pt. 2. Chicago: The Final Call Inc., 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Women in Islam Educational Series*. Pt. 3. Chicago: The Final Call Inc., 1994.
- Muhammad, Wallace D. *As The Light Shineth From The East*. Chicago: WDM Publishing Co., 1980.
- Nembhard, Len. *Trials and Triumphs of Marcus Garvey*. Kingston: Gleaner Publishing Company, 1940.
- Newton, Huey P. *Revolutionary Suicide*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973.
- Oates, Stephen B. *Let The Trumpet Sound*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982.
- Payne, Robert. *The History of Islam*. New York: Dorset Press, 1990.
- Prince-A-Cuba. *Our Mecca Is Harlem: Clarence 13X (Allah) and the Five Percent*. Hampton: U.B. & U.S. Communications Systems, Inc., 1994.

- Rogers, J.A. *As Nature Leads*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1987.
- Sahib, Hatim A. "The Nation of Islam." Master's thesis. University of Chicago, 1951.
- Sertima, Ivan Van, ed. *Great Black Leaders: Ancient and Modern*. New Brunswick: Journal of African Civilizations Ltd., Inc., 1988.
- Stuckey, Sterling. *Slave Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- The Holy Bible*. King James Version.
- The Holy Qur'an*. Yusuf Ali Translation.
- The Honorable Elijah Muhammad*. Atlanta: Nation of Islam. Documentary, n.d.
- Turnbaugh, William A., et al. *Understanding Physical Anthropology and Archaeology*. New York: West Publishing Company, 1993.
- Turner, Richard Brent. "Islam In The United States In The 1920s: The Quest For A New Vision in Afro-American Religion." Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 1986.
- VanDeBurg, William L., ed. *Modern Black Nationalism From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.
- Vincent, Theodore G. *Black Power and the Garvey Movement*. Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1971.
- Walker, David and Henry Highland Garnet. *Walker's Appeal and Garnet's Address*. Nashville: James C. Winston Publishing Company, Inc., 1994.
- Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. Unabridged. 1993.
- Windsor, Rudolph R. *From Babylon to Timbuktu*. Atlanta: Windsor's Golden Series, 1969.
- Wolfenstein, Eugene V. *The Victims of Democracy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.
- Woodson, Carter G. *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*. Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers Inc., 1919.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1990.
- Wright, Ellen and Michel Fabre, eds. *Richard Wright Reader*. New York: De Capo Press, 1997.

York, Malachi Z. *Is God A Wimp?* Eatonton: The Holy Tabernacle Ministries, 1994.